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Amish Country News

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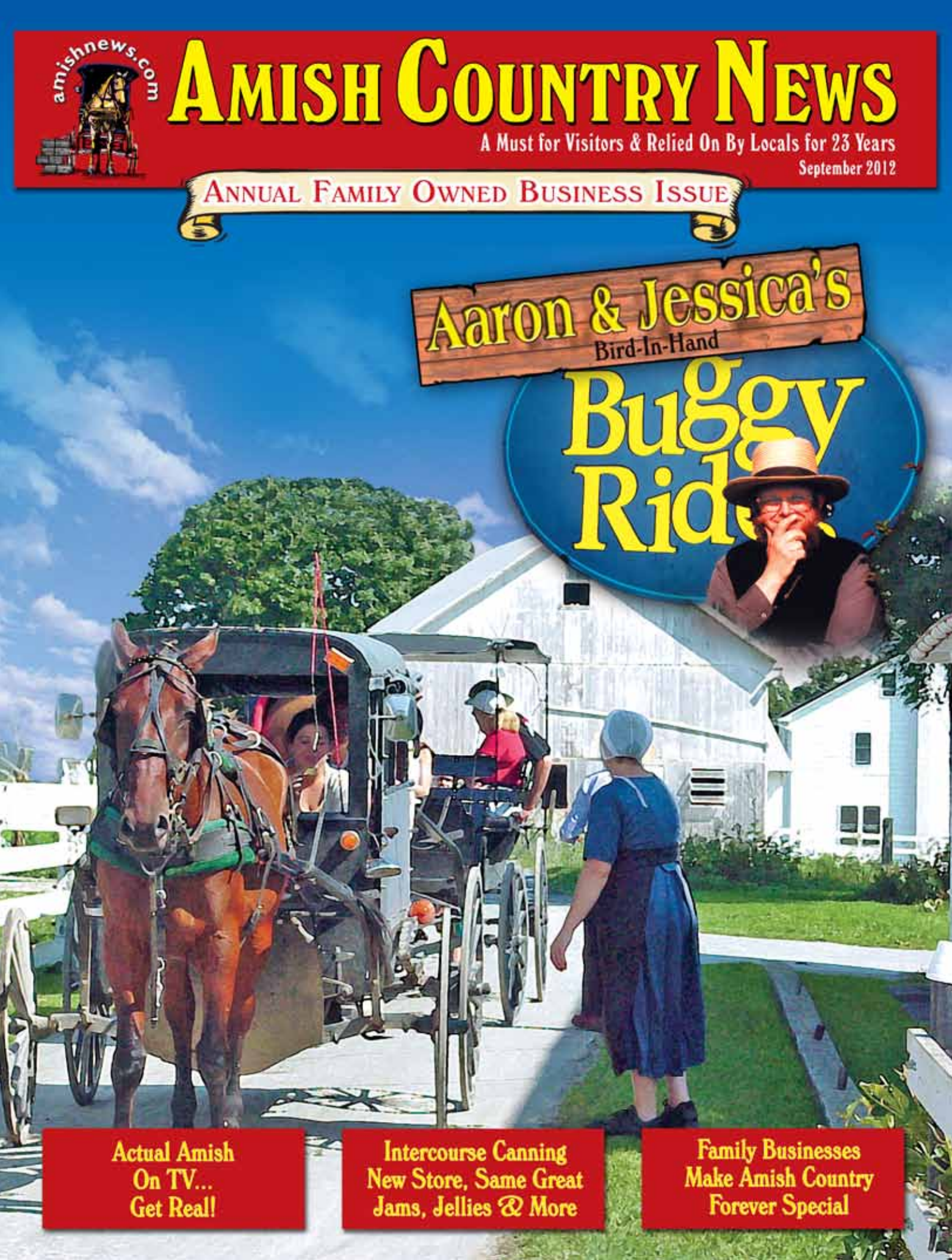
September 2012

Annual Family Owned Business Issue

Aaron & Jessica's Bird-In-Hand Buggy Ride



Actual Amish On TV... Get Real!

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Family Businesses Make Amish Country Forever Special

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BEVERLY LEWIS

Twenty-four-year-old Joanna Kurtz is so far proving the adage "always the bridesmaid, never the bride." Yet despite appearances, she has a beau who is secretly courting her from afar. Will her hidden passion for writing and his responsibilities to his family keep them forever apart?

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DUTCH HAVEN LANCASTER COUNTY LANDMARK

While driving along Route 30 in Lancaster County, you may see a few unfamiliar, if not unique, sites. You may catch a glimpse of some folks dressed a little unusually. You'll probably see a few horse-drawn carriages instead of cars. And, you'll undoubtedly notice the Dutch Haven windmill. This landmark building has been drawing thousands of visitors each week to Lancaster County for the past 50 years. Opening first as a restaurant in 1946, the Dutch Haven operated with great success with a world famous Shoo Fly pie recipe.

Today, the Dutch Haven staple is still "America's Best Shoo Fly Pie." All you have to do is pass through the door and you will be offered a sample taste of this famous pie—warmed and topped with whipped cream, just like it was always served in the restaurant, years ago.

Some 40,000 pies will be sold at the Dutch Haven this year alone. While most of these shoo fly pies are purchased over the counter, some are shipped UPS. Many pies are sold to faithful customers who have been buying them from Dutch Haven for over half a century!

Come Taste America's Best Shoo Fly Pie **FREE!**

As always at Dutch Haven, the famous pie that was featured in Time magazine is just part of the story. The windmill building now houses one of, if not the best, selections of primitive Amish pine furniture in the area. Corner cupboards, pie safes, chests, and shelves are all available. Hundreds of pieces of Amish woodcrafts fill what once were the dining rooms of this wonderful old building. In addition, thousands of other items from pot holders to collectibles, T-shirts, small wood crafts, local jams, jellies, and honey, and much more make Dutch Haven a true shopping experience.

Dutch Haven is open 7 days a week, Fri. & Sat. 9am-9pm, Sun.-Thurs. 9am-7pm. For more information about this Lancaster County landmark, call (717) 687-0111.

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The Jack Meyer Family Business

by Clinton Martin

Jack Meyer, owner of Aaron & Jessica's Buggy Rides, traces his family's roots back over 300 years in America. His mother's side arrived in 1693, and his father's in 1759. Many generations later, in spite of the centuries of history written in the books, not all has changed for Jack's family. In fact, the mode of transportation isn't very different at all. Horse-drawn carriages have stayed with the family all those years!

Jack explains that Aaron & Jessica's Buggy Rides is the only carriage-ride in Amish Country owned by Plain people (meaning Amish, Mennonite, Brethren.) He raised his family in the Old Order church, so life with horses was as normal for them as life with cars was for his more modern English (meaning non-Amish) neighbors.

His two sons and four daughters are now grown, with children of their own. He counts 14 grandchildren total, and notes that all three generations are active in helping with the family business, providing visitors to Amish Country with an authentic horse-drawn buggy ride through picturesque Amish countryside.

Of course, the credit for Aaron & Jessica's Buggy Rides resides fully on the shoulders of Jack's daughter Jessica. She was the first to notice how out-of-town visitors seemed eager to experience what it was like to ride in a buggy. She wanted to share the experience and asked her dad if they could offer rides in the family carriage. You might wonder where the name Aaron comes from? Maybe you guessed --- he was Jessica's horse!

Jessica tells us, "My buggy ride can be one of the highlights of any visit to Amish Country. I think it's a must. In the summer, a ride is a great way to cool off. My dad says, 'It's like sitting in the shade with a fan on... 409 air conditioning...four wheels turning at nine miles an hour.'"

The carriage drivers at Aaron & Jessica's are all local Plain people who have grown up around horses and are as skilled at driving the carriage as they are friendly and professional. There are dozens of drivers – Amish, Mennonite, and Brethren men and women who know the PA Dutch culture and heritage personally and are able to relate it well to visitors. Some hail from farming backgrounds, others from family businesses like horse stables and harness shops. The personal insight of each driver is slightly different than the next.

Seeing Amish Country the way the Plain people do, from a horse-drawn carriage or buggy, is a sublime experience. At Aaron & Jessica's Buggy Rides there are seven different routes with 20 different options. Depending on the ride chosen (there are different lengths offering stops at farms, craft shops, etc.) visitors can expect to ride by Amish one-room schools, pass through all-Amish areas where the land on both sides is farmed without the use of tractors, and even walk around an Amish farm.

Visitors wanting just a taste of a countryside ride can choose the "Cookie Run." It takes about 20 minutes, and meanders through three miles of scenic back roads. A brief stop is made at an Amish farm where you can purchase homemade drinks and cookies. The "Amish Town Tour" is a four-mile journey passing through an area of all-Amish farms as far as the eye can see. The ride takes 30 minutes, and includes passing by an Amish family business.

The "Amish Farm Tour" is a ride that includes a stop at a real Amish farm. You'll be able to get off the buggy and walk around in the barn. Currently there are cows and beautiful Clydesdale horses being raised there. Expect this ride to take about an hour.

Finally, the "Amish Journeys" ride is for visitors seeking a wonderfully authentic Amish trek. You'll tour multiple miles of Amish back roads, see multiple farms, and visit an Amish store. You'll be able to buy handmade Amish crafts, farm-fresh eggs, hearth-baked bread, and see plenty of farm animals. Along this route, you'll also pass by a real water-powered flour mill. This ride takes 75 to 90 minutes.

Whichever ride you choose, you're sure to enjoy an authentic Amish buggy ride with Aaron & Jessica's. They don't take reservations, but there is seldom a wait. Carriages leave continuously throughout the day, departing almost every ten minutes. Cash only, although there is an ATM on site.

Before or after your ride, you'll be able to relax in the nearby shaded picnic grove. And of course, the rest of Plain & Fancy Farm offers other wonderful activities to complete your day in Amish Country, including the special effects production of JACOB'S CHOICE, which used Jack's carriages in the filming, at the Amish Experience Theater.

Aaron & Jessica's Buggy Rides generally operates seven days a week, rain or shine, from dawn to dusk. Well, actually, from around 9:00 a.m. The horses need breakfast before they go to work, after all! For more information, visit www.amishbuggyrides.com. For group reservations of 20 or more, call 717-768-8400 ext. 221.

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Amish Country News
September Events

September 1 & 3
Hospice of Lancaster County Labor Day Auction
Lampeter Fairgrounds

September 7 - 9
Run, Ride, and Soar Weekend
Bird-in-Hand Family Restaurant & Smorgasbord

September 8
Founder's Day Historical Demonstrations
Ephrata Cloister

September 15 – 23
Day Out with Thomas
Strasburg Rail Road

September 15
Whoopie Pie Festival
Hershey Farm Restaurant & Motor Inn

September 22
Ned Foltz, local pottery demonstrations
Village Pottery, Intercourse

September 28 – 30
Homecoming Antique Extravaganza
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Non-Stop Revelry Continues at the Rollicking Pennsylvania Renaissance Faire

by Clinton Martin

God Save the Queen! A refrain you might not expect to hear this side of the Atlantic, let alone in Amish Country, rings out daily at the glorious Pennsylvania Renaissance Faire now in full swing in the Victorian gardens of Mount Hope Estate and Winery in northern Lancaster County. This annual celebration of bygone days and knights is commemorating its 32nd season of jousting knights and royal delights. I was there Weekend Two and I think the Faire just might be bigger and better than ever.

As always, the Faire offers entertainment for all ages. The never ending display of music, dance, kid's activities, and action-packed shows certainly allows one to imagine what such a grand country holiday might have been like some 400 years ago during the reign of Queen Elizabeth I.

Mirth and merriment are the order of the day across the Faire's 30 acre Village of Yore. If it's fiercely lifelike battles of lance and shield that appeal to you, head to Bosworth Field for the Ultimate Joust. I could write the entire article about this show, so real it was a little scary with explosive clashes of steel, warriors falling from galloping warhorses at full speed, and special effects explosions that seemed to rock the ground beneath me. I'll let it be at "awesome." The Human Chess Match had more than its own share of action as well, for when a piece is captured a battle for the square follows with expert displays of broadsword, rapier and dagger and hand-to-hand combat apparent throughout.

More refined and a joy to watch in the shaded audience was a Shakespearean production upon a three-story replica of the Bard's very own Globe Theater.

In addition to the more than 90 shows performed on the Faire's 15 open-air stages, you'll find scores of vendors and handcraft artisans, food booths offering an amazing array of hearty treats from smoked turkey legs to beef brisket to salads and fresh-baked goods. Libations are tasty ales from the on-site Swashbuckler Micro-Brewery and award winning wines from the original Mount Hope Estate & Winery.

Colorfully Costumed Characters Everywhere!

The Faire's streets are filled with scores of stage performers each day, but there are hundreds more costumed villagers to meet, including ancient craft artisans, maze masters and gamesmen. Crafters include the village glass blower making authentic pieces of art from the early Roman, Medieval, and Renaissance periods, blacksmiths crafting swords and shields, and the Faire's own herbalist among many, many others.

Come Back Again and Again

To keep things new and fresh, the Faire offers specialty themed weekends throughout the 13 weekend season in addition to the regular weekly activities. Each themed weekend welcomes different performers and entertainment including contests and activities to involve Faire patrons. Some of the upcoming themed weekends include Chivalry and Romance, Invasion of the Pyrates, Children's Fantasy, Scottish & Irish weekends, Oktoberfest, and Heroes of the Realm weekend where the Faire honors all heroes past and present who have dedicated their lives to help protect and serve others. The Faire concludes with three weekends of Halloween Daze and Spooky Knights, which pretty much says it all.

A Perfect Ending to the Perfect Day

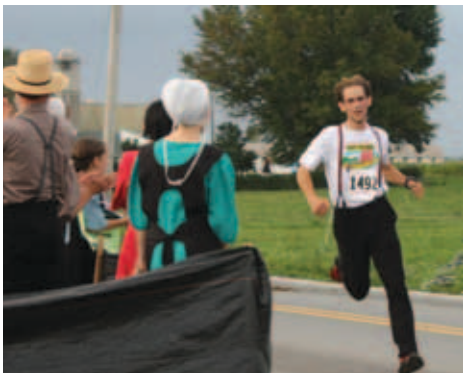
I suggest you stay to the very end to join the entire cast of merriemakers at the Finale in Song, an extravaganza where everyone gathers to celebrate the end of another fun-filled festival day at the Shire. It is a rollicking finale filled with song, dance, and, from my experience, lots of surprises. When it's all said and done, the entire cast forms a marvelous gauntlet at the Castle Gates and bids each and every guest a fond "Fare Thee Well!" as we all head for our own carriages for the journey home.

The wondrous fantasy that is the Pennsylvania Renaissance Faire continues Saturdays, Sundays, and Labor Day Monday, 11 AM – 8 PM through October 28. Adult admission is $29.95 and child admission, ages 5 to 11, is $10.95. Parking is free. Games, rides, foods, beverages, and crafts have additional costs. Visit PaRenFaire.com for complete show details, advanced click-to-print discount tickets, and helpful tips for a fun-filled Faire day. An exclusive AMISH COUNTRY NEWS Labor Day Monday discount offer can be found on page 12 of this issue. Information is also available through the Faire Box Office by calling (717) 665-7021.

The Faire is set amidst the splendor of the formal gardens of Mount Hope Estate & Winery, Route 72, ½ mile south of PA Turnpike Exit 266, 15 miles north of Lancaster and 14 miles east of Hershey.

Running with the Amish

by Jim Smucker



Amish runner near the finish line of the Bird-in-Hand Half Marathon.

Several years ago I was sitting next to a friend of mine at the counter at the Bird-in-Hand Family Restaurant enjoying lunch. Next to him was a 20-something Amishman named Amos. My friend introduced the two of us and—knowing that I was a marathon runner—said that Amos wants to run a marathon. I was surprised, to say the least. An Amishman wanting to run a marathon? Despite the fact that I had lived in this community all my life, I had no idea the Amish were interested in running.

We spent our lunch that day talking about running and his motivation. At the end of the conversation, I invited him to join several of us "English" on one of our full-moon runs. Each month, under the light of the full moon, we run 10 miles along the back roads of Lancaster County.

On his first full moon run, Amos brought several Amish running friends along. What started out as just "English" runners has grown into over 40 people running each full moon, the majority of whom are Amish. We've even named our group, "Vella Shpringa," which when translated to English from Pennsylvania Dutch means "gotta run."

So what is the motivation for the Amish to run? The Amish are hard-working, active, goal-oriented people, all of which are assets for runners. Given that more and more Amish are no longer working on farms, they have more energy to burn at the end of the day. It is also a very simple sport. You don't need any equipment, other than running shoes (and some of the Amish just run barefooted), and they can run in their traditional Amish garb. It is also a community-building sport. On a 10-mile run there is lots of time for sharing, getting to know each other, and encouragement.

The first known Amish man running in a marathon was in 2003. The youngest known Amish finisher in a marathon was this past March when a 13-year-old Amish girl ran and completed the 26.2 mile Garden Sport Marathon. Bart Yasso, the chief running officer for *Runner's World* Magazine, ran with the "Vella Shpringa" group this past fall and wrote a feature article in the April edition of *Runner's World* entitled "Running with the Amish." (http://www.runnersworld.com/article/0,7120,s6-243-297--14236-0,00.html)

Continued on Page 48

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Train Your Sights on Amtrak

by Clinton Martin

Have you ever taken the Subway in Lancaster? Neither have I, because there isn't one. But, Lancaster does have many options when it comes to traveling through the Red Rose city. Of course you can drive your car, take a bus, or hail a cab, but often the most relaxing is simply riding the rails. Amtrak connects cities all over the Country, yet each route feels distinctly unique to that area. After all, when you are pulling up to the Lancaster train station, rolling Amish farmland suddenly turns into a vibrant downtown with a lively arts scene. As you disembark, the stately old train station is also intriguing. You can literally see the many decades that this bulwark has withstood; styles of architecture sit beside or atop one another, including the latest of touches providing a modern face-lift.

So now you've arrived in Lancaster. No stress from traffic. No double-takes at gas prices. No hair-raising cab rides. Just a lovely city in the middle of a world-famous County to explore. For visitors wishing to see the Amish Country without transportation to Lancaster, Connective Tours (a division of Philadelphia Trolley Works in Philadelphia) runs day trips to Amish Country via train to Lancaster. Transportation from the train station is included to the Amish Experience at Plain and Fancy Farm. Here you will enjoy the Amish Experience Theater, the Amish Country Homestead, and the Farmlands bus tour. You return to Philadelphia in the early evening. Call 215-925-TOUR for details or visit www.phillytour.com.

Of course, turn the tables and you repeat the script with a new plot twist. Walking onto a train in Lancaster, you can see many interesting neighbors, such as Mt. Joy (where only a few steps from the station stands Bube's Brewery, a fascinating operating pre-prohibition brewery-restaurant).

Perhaps, the State Capitol is more your style? With exhilarating nightlife, grandiose museums, and plenty of you'll-only-find-it-here attractions, Harrisburg is an easy and convenient ride on the westbound.

Turning your attention East, you'll find yourself transported in style and comfort to Philadelphia. Anyone who knows American history knows Philadelphia, but you could probably go for a refresher in America's most historic square mile. Besides, the City of Brotherly Love has embraced many of today's trends, even becoming clear leaders in what's hot these days. Famous TV chefs ply Philly's restaurant trade, an exceptional scene for nightlife wakes up your inner dance diva, and world-class sports throw the city into delight with victories, and into pouting with defeat.

Finding things to do in Lancaster, and the neighboring destinations, isn't difficult at all. Getting there is usually half the battle. Forget all the woes of just getting there by taking the train. You'll probably get there faster, spend less money, and you can actually concentrate on taking in the scenery instead of looking for that exit that you just passed by without knowing it.

Sam's Steins & Collectibles...Take Me To Your Man Cave!

by Clinton Martin

A man's house is his castle, but chances are the other "loyal subjects" of the realm have a lot of say as to what that castle looks like. Fluffy, frilly, and flamboyant decorations hang on the walls, crowd the shelves, and push the King's knick-knacks out of sight.

His Majesty's saving grace? His man cave. Ah yes, every man's four-walled sanctuary in which to express his own style and character. The man cave can be filled with amusements, food, beverages, or simply an over-sized easy chair and a stack of old records and a working turntable. What is sure --- the proper decorations must be secured to create an authentic man cave mood.

One might scour all four corners of the Land for such necessities, but chances are that if you're reading my pithy words of Sam-Praise, you need but visit the nearby ultimate man cave, Sam's Steins & Collectibles. After all, proprietor Sam May has scoured and searched for over 40 years, putting together a massive collection of the man cave necessities. Beer steins? You bet --- over 900 on display! Some depict famous American breweries while others are handmade works of art from skilled German manufacturers. In fact, every September Sam receives a shipment from Munich, Germany containing all the official Oktoberfest steins. Most are already spoken for by loyal customers before they even arrive, but some can be available for you if you dally not.

Other breweriana collectibles, including die-cast beer trucks, neon signs, beer coasters, beer glasses, bottle openers, beer trays, tap handles, beer signs and posters will also be found. Sam even offers a custom beer tap program which allows him to apply one of thousands of images onto a blank handle, personalizing it to your individual taste. Need a "Chevy" beer tap? Done. How about a "Pittsburgh Steelers" handle? Easy. Sam's library of images truly goes on and on, so allow a little time for your perusal.

Sam's Steins, and his one-of-a-kind man cave supply store, is located along Route 30 in Lancaster, across from the Tanger Outlets, less than a half mile west of Dutch Wonderland. Open Monday through Saturday 10:00am to 6:00pm, call 717-394-6404 or visit SamsManCave.com for details.

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All in the Family

by Brad Igou

The owners of the Shady Maple Companies, Miriam and Marvin Weaver and their three married sons, Phillip, Curtis, and Linford.

Let's get one thing straight about our Family-Owned Business Issue. We are not talking about huge corporations that are family owned. Wal-Mart, founded by Sam Walton with a single store in Arkansas in 1962, is the Nation's #1 retailer in revenues and well over two million employees. Ford is another mega corporation, with Ford family management since 1903.

But if you are like me, when you hear the words "family-owned," you are surely thinking of a small business. Here in Amish Country, family business members know all their employees, and often, all of their employees are family members!

You can peruse the various articles in this issue about how many of these businesses began, and they are each and every one fascinating reads. I decided to take a more general look at what these businesses mean for us, and how they differ from other businesses.

Starting a business is both a challenge and a risk. Not all grand ideas and dreams come to success. One only need look at how many restaurants open and close to realize no pot of gold is guaranteed just because of money or hard work. If you decide to open your own pizza joint, know that you'll be in an olympic battle against Pizza Hut, Dominoes, and Papa John's, and may the better crust win.

While most of the businesses we profile have remained relatively small, others have grown into Amish Country's top attractions, and still remain within the family. These include Sight & Sound, the Pennsylvania Renaissance Faire, and Shady Maple. Some of our family businesses end up being sold because offspring simply have other interests or there was no plan for succession. This has been the case with some in PA Dutch Country, most notably Dutch Wonderland.

Simply to say a business is family-owned does not assure that it provides a superior product. But from my experience here, owners have more intimate, daily contact with their product and employees. Many of our businesses are indeed small, with the Amish more and more prime examples of family-owned "cottage" businesses, although farming remains the number one occupation.

Of course we urge you to explore our backroads and discover our small, unique family run businesses. Most started simply because someone had a particular talent or passion, be it canning jellies (Intercourse is home to two famous businesses), making furniture (again, read through these pages), or growing and painting gourds (Smucker's Gourd Farm is frankly amazing). For others, the business is little more than a roadside stand where baked goods are sold. A quilt shop might start in a basement, then move to a room upstairs, and finally into its own building.

When you call these folks, one of their children might answer the phone, Dad might be out milking the cows, or Mom could be busy doing the wash. Children learn early about salesmanship and what running a business means. They have much responsibility. They work hard. Tour companies receive calls encouraging them to bring visitors around when homemade potato chips are fresh from the kitchen.

Amish frequently ask their "English" friends for suggestions on how to increase sales. Some have attended Dale Carnegie classes. When one of the boys on the farm where the movie WITNESS was filmed asked me what to paint on his horseshoes so they would sell better, I immediately told him to paint on the words "Witness Farm" and you have an exclusive souvenir.

Running a family business is unique in many ways and has long intrigued me. Doing a little Internet research, I found a list of Do's and Don'ts which point to the challenges of the family business…

- Do expect to do more than your share of the dirty-work.
- Do expect conflict, and ensure there is a process to resolve it.
- Do develop a thick skin and a good sense of humor.
- Do keep the shared family vision intact.
- Do contribute more than you take away.
- Do not allow yourself to feel entitled to any position, assignment or future role.
- Do not discuss family issues at work.
- Do not throw your last name around or play favorites.
- Do not expect an eight hour day.
- Do not forget, it is your legacy too.

A writer noted that sometimes the founders of the business don't always see their children, "whose diapers they once changed, possessing the same kind of verve and tenacity" they had. Fathers sometimes treat adult children in the business with a parental attitude, while mothers may be concerned about equal treatment for all. Children may have their own struggles, just as brothers and sisters do in any family, eager to "take over" or feeling "entitled."

Attitudes and talents can lead to both opportunity and expansion as well as disagreements and division. The key is to keep personalities out of things, deal in the present, be a good steward of the business, and for family members to "turn it over to the next generation in better condition than when they took it over."

In what is surely the case in Amish Country, planning and discussions of mission, attitude, training, marketing, product development, and policies tend not to happen in a board room, but at the dinner table.

The number, range, and variety of family-owned businesses here is an important part of what makes Amish Country so special. I know you will enjoy their individual stories sprinkled about these pages. These are families who put their hearts and souls into their businesses. Many give back to their church or community, be it as volunteer firefighters or doing mission work around the world. In many cases, they will literally be welcoming you into their home. You will likely meet their children, and purchase something they made themselves. In the purest sense, for them, it's all in the family.

Authentic Farmstead Cheese at September Farm

by Clinton Martin

With so many artisan products coming out of Amish Country, you might expect cheese makers a-plenty. But, surprisingly the intricate process of creating cheese is studied and mastered by but a small number of passionate local "masters of pasturage."

The Rotelle family of September Farm Cheese, whose family business is a labor of love and not a get-rich-quick scheme, is Amish Country's first-family of cheese. David and Roberta, as well as their five children, work together to craft a constantly growing selection of farmstead cheeses made right on the farm, only steps from the dairy barn housing the cows that produce the most important ingredient, milk!

The process of turning a vat of creamy milk into traditional wax-coated bars of cheese is in some ways very simple, but to watch it in action is to understand how an elementary concept can be so difficult, especially when the standards are set "Rotelle High." The family embraces the challenge, and consistently turns out cheeses that place well not only on fine cheese plates, but also at high-stakes competitions throughout the country.

While David & Roberta are the first of the Rotelle family tree to operate a dairy and cheesery, they are certainly not the first to dip a toe in the food industry. Indeed, David is at least the fourth generation involved in the business of food. His great-grandfather who had come from Italy in the late 1800s to settle in the greater Philadelphia area owned a small grocery which supported his family. His children helped transition the grocery business into the second generation by adding door-to-door delivery of fruits and vegetables. David's father, August, joined the family business as the third generation, and helped grow the grocery business' wholesale accounts.

By this point, the family-owned business was officially Rotelle Incorporated, and had grown to occupy a 100 acre campus. In the mid-1990s the family business was sold to a large-scale food distributor headquartered in Richmond, VA. Transitioning from warehouse to farmhouse, David, the fourth generation, got back to basics of operating a dairy farm along the eastern edge of Lancaster County, near the town of Honey Brook.

Today, the Rotelle family farm is home to September Farm Cheese, a true farmstead cheese that is available for sales and sampling on site in the attractively appointed store. Watch cheese being made, sample freely, and shop for cheese and cheese accessories and gifts. The farm is open Monday through Saturday 9:00am to 5:00pm. Head East on Route 322 from Blue Ball. Continue approximately five miles on Route 322 to Mill Road. Mill Road is the next road after the Sunoco gas station and Churchtown Road. Turn right on Mill Road. September Farm is one mile ahead on the left. Call 610-273-3552 for additional information.

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Signs of Business Everywhere

by Erik Wesner

Traveling the backroads and highways of Lancaster County, you're sure to notice the many signs advertising Amish businesses, as much a part of the scenery as the countless silos and buggies dotting the landscape.

These take many forms--from simple hand-painted letters humbly telling of "ROOT BEER" or "QUILTS" at the next drive, to professionally-produced placards pointing the way to Amish manufacturers employing dozens of workers. For many visitors, these signs are guideposts as they travel from farm to farm, coming away with trunks full of Amish goods and heads full of memories.

Behind every sign is a family, and a story. A furniture shop might support a household of 8 or 10 people (a typical size for the Amish), and give youth ample opportunities to learn a trade working with parents and relatives. A hand-stamp shop for making greeting cards might be a single woman's passion and main livelihood. A young father may start a sideline business making buggies in his barn, dreaming of setting up full-time some day.

Whether large or small, home enterprises have become a very important means of making a living for Amish. There was a time when most were farmers. Today, though farms can still be seen everywhere, only a minority of Amish plow and plant. High land prices and large families have put farming out of reach for many. Others develop interests which naturally lead them away from agriculture. The growth of markets for Amish-made goods has led to more Amish people making a living in different trades than ever before.

Signs only tell part of the Amish business story, however. Some enterprises are less visible than others. Many Amish from Lancaster County travel a few days each week to Pennsylvania Dutch markets in places like Philadelphia and Washington D.C. There they sell the same products you find in the County, bringing a piece of Amish Country to the city. Lancaster Amish also hit the roads in large numbers on building crews, contracting to do all manner of construction work. These "signless" businesses make up a large chunk of the entrepreneurial activity happening all around this bustling region.

As you might imagine, business has changed Amish life. Amish have more contact with the outside world than they did a few generations back, when a higher percentage were farming. Visiting cities and English areas regularly, and seeing a high influx of visitors from outside, has meant increased contact with the world and its influences. This worries some Amish.

However their growth remains strong, with Amish youth still choosing to join the church in large numbers. Small businesses have helped Amish survive while maintaining their Old Order character. Amish still finish schooling at 8th grade, still drive the buggy, still maintain the same customs such as home worship and Plain dress.

Despite what we might think, Amish do change, and always have. That change usually happens more slowly than in the non-Amish world. Business has altered Amish life, but has also let them make a living without making drastic changes, such as pursuing higher education or adopting motor vehicles. Amish appreciate what business opportunities have allowed their families and communities.

So you can think of the Amish business signs as an invitation of sorts. Drop by, have a chat, pick up some produce or a wall hanging to take home. Just never on Sunday.

Erik Wesner is the author of *Success Made Simple: An Inside Look at Why Amish Businesses Thrive*. He also writes the popular *Amish America* blog, at amishamerica.com.

Oh, How Sweet It Is…The Whoopie Pie Festival at Hershey Farm

by Clinton Martin

How do you say Whoopie Pie in French? You don't! The spherical cakes sandwiched with delicious, creamy icing in between are distinctly American, and specifically trace their origin to Pennsylvania Dutch Country. No matter what you might hear about other states laying claim to one of Amish Country's signature desserts (shoofly pie being the other), this anytime snack is one we lay claim to and are justifiably proud of.

The whoopie pie (sometimes called a gob, black-and-white, bob, or "BFO" for (Big Fat Oreo) is a baked yummy made of two round mound-shaped pieces of cake, the most common flavor being chocolate, with a sweet, creamy frosting sandwiched between. According to food historians, industrious Amish women would bake these treats with leftover cake batter and icing and would put them in the family farmers' lunchboxes. When the lucky recipients found these surprises, they would shout "Whoopie!"

While there are countless bakeries locally offering up dozens of flavors, one name synonymous with whoopie pies in these parts is Hershey Farm Restaurant & Motor Inn when, for one day in September, the normally quiet and quaint place to eat, shop, and stay becomes a festival grounds of sweet-tooth fun.

Hershey Farm kitchens whip up batches of 200 whoopie pies at a time, eventually baking an amazing total of 40,000 of the delectable goodies. About 27,000 are eaten the day of the festival, while the others actually go to work in the various events held throughout the day.

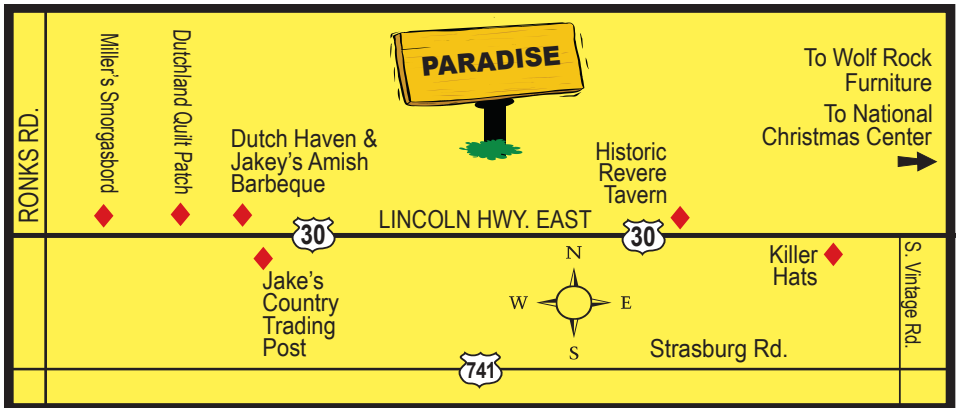
Traditional family-fair day activities are offered, like pony rides and face-painting, but special whoopie-pie themed festivities rule the day. There's Whoopie Pie Checkers, a Whoopie Pie Eating Contest, Whoopie Pie Hunts, a Create Your Own Whoopie Pie station, and the unveiling of the World's Largest Whoopie Pie.

In all, visitors to the festival will be able to sample and shop among 100 different flavors of

whoopie pies. The festival is one you should make tracks to. Remember, it's one day only - Saturday, September 15th (rain date Sunday the 16th). Admission is free. Hours are 11:00am to 4:00pm.

Chart your way to whoopie pie madness and fun by heading south on Route 896 from Route 30. Hershey Farm is off to your right after about a mile. Call 717-687-8635 or visit www.whoopiepiefestival.com for further information.

Welcome to Our Paradise



Visitors to Lancaster from the east on RT 30 travel through Paradise, which celebrates its 300th anniversary this year. The town's story traces back to Europe over 300 years ago, to the area of the Palatinate in Germany where Protestants had settled following the declaration of King Louis XIV that all Protestants in France would be persecuted. Fearing a French invasion, many accepted the invitation to settle in the New World in William Penn's colony of Penn's Woods. By 1712, they had secured land in Lancaster's Pequea Valley as the area's first white people, living peaceably with local Indians.

The origins of RT 30, also known as "Lincoln Highway," date back to Lancaster's Colonial days when the frontier county needed a highway to connect it with the provincial capital of Philadelphia. The first road that was constructed is now RT 340, still referred to as the "Old Philadelphia Pike." Soon, it was apparent that this road was insufficient to handle the increasing traffic, and in 1790, a commission to survey a new route was created. Since the cost was too much for the state to undertake, the company charged with building it was given the power to demand "reasonable" tolls from users. Investors received dividends earned from tolls collected along the gates of the turnpike. (As the toll was paid, the gate or "pike" was turned, hence the term "turnpike").

The Act described the construction of the highway, which was to be a bed of small crushed stones on top with, rather than dirt, larger stones underneath to prevent carriage wheels from cutting into the soil. This revolutionary system of road construction is credited to a John McAdam, whose name became the term for paved or "macadam" roads. The "Lincoln Highway" (RT 30) opened in 1795 as the first long-distance, hard surfaced road in the country. Taverns and stagecoach stops grew up along the turnpike for weary travelers. Of these, the Revere Tavern, dating back to 1740 and originally called the "Sign of the Spread Eagle", still proudly stands today. In 1841, the tavern became the residence of Reverend Edward V. Buchanan and his wife Eliza Foster Buchanan. Eliza was the sister of Stephen Foster, whose immortal songs will always be a part of Americana. Foster not only penned music at the tavern, but sent many of his manuscripts to Eliza, also a talented musician, for her approval. On the banks of the Pequea Creek, Eliza and Stephen played many of Stephen's 200 songs, including "Way Down Upon the Swanee River" and "Oh, Susanna." Wherever you happen to call "paradise," we hope that a little bit of our own Paradise won't do you any harm!

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Amish Country's Coolest Looks are at Killer Hats

by Clinton Martin

The first order of business is to clarify that Killer Hats is far from just a hat store. In addition to the extensive selection of very cool headwear, Killer Hats offers boots, belts, buckles, and lots more for the fashion conscious. Truly, we're talking extreme fashions for Ladies, Gentleman, Cowboys, Bikers and Scoundrels. Whether your mood is distinguished, rough, tough, classy or classic, proprietors Steve & Linda Wilson have the look you want.

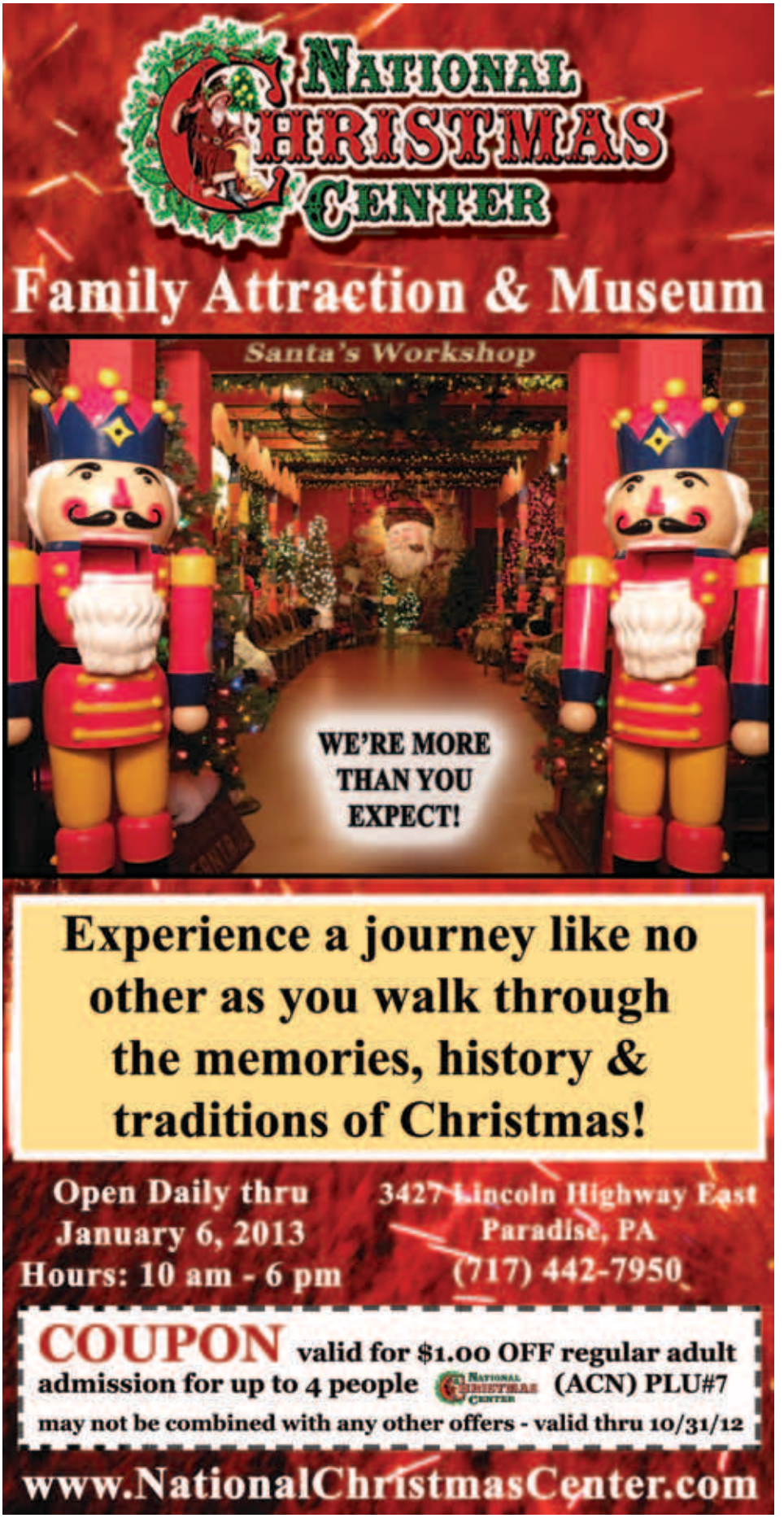
The business began in 1949 as The Hat Corner, and grew steadily until 2008 when founder Edward Morris Wilson decided to retire. By the way, he will celebrate his 95th birthday in 2013 and I'm wondering if it just might be that wearing cool hats is linked to longevity?

In any case, Steve and Linda decided to keep the business going, and began by taking the inventory of hats around to small street fairs and expos. This proved both fun and productive, and sparked a whole new side of the business of attending shows. In a short time, Ed and Linda had changed the name from The Hat Corner to Killer Hats, and were on the road with a four-man crew and a specialized tractor trailer, expanding out to rodeos, motorcycle shows, sporting events, and auto races.

As the business grew, they realized the need for some permanent roots and opened their showroom in Paradise. Today, the sales mix has evolved with the business growth and is as much fedoras, caps, hiking, hunting, beaching, boat, snow, rain, derbies, top hats, homburgs, steam punk, Amish and simply anything else you can fit upon your head as it is fashion and accessories.

A core principle of their family-owned business that Steve and Linda always stress is that the enterprise is now and always will be, U.S. based. Their employees are loyal, highly trained and hardworking. They pay fair wages and enroll their people in the Company benefit plan. They also make it a point to recruit, train, and retain men and women who have served in the U.S. military. Killer Hats is definitely not just an online operation with an overseas call center and a U.S. shipping address.

I hope I've piqued sufficient interest to visit Killer Hats, for I know that you'll be glad you did. The showroom is located along Route 30 in Paradise, four miles east of Rockvale Outlets. For GPS driving directions, use 3000 Lincoln Highway East, Paradise. Hours are Monday to Thursday 10:00am to 6:00pm, Friday 10:00am to 8:00pm, Saturday 10:00am to 6:00pm, and Sunday 11:00am to 5:00pm. Call 717-687-7666 or visit killerhats.com for more information.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Interactive Ice Cream Fun…The Turkey Hill Experience

by Clinton Martin

People country-wide might know Turkey Hill for ice cream or iced tea, but chances are these days it's probably both. The truth is Turkey Hill is equally passionate about both and this home-grown, family-owned business is proving to be the Little Dairy That Could!

Since 1931, the Frey family has operated the Turkey Hill Dairy. Butter, cream, and dairy treats were in the family's repertoire from the beginning, with iced tea coming along (in a big way) later in the story. Today, visitors can finally taste and see the Turkey Hill story in a fun and interactive way in picturesque Columbia on the western border of Lancaster County along the Susquehanna River.

Opened just last year, the Turkey Hill Experience combines a fun, yet informative, visitor center with a hands-on interactive tour. And yes, you do get to taste delicious ice cream and iced tea! Your first impression will likely be the grand water-tower beside the building which is easily seen from nearby Route 30, the highway that leads you to the heart of Amish Country. Your second impression will probably be the striking historical façade, an imposing red-brick former industrial silk mill, along with the giant plaster cow that provides a welcoming pose outside the main entrance.

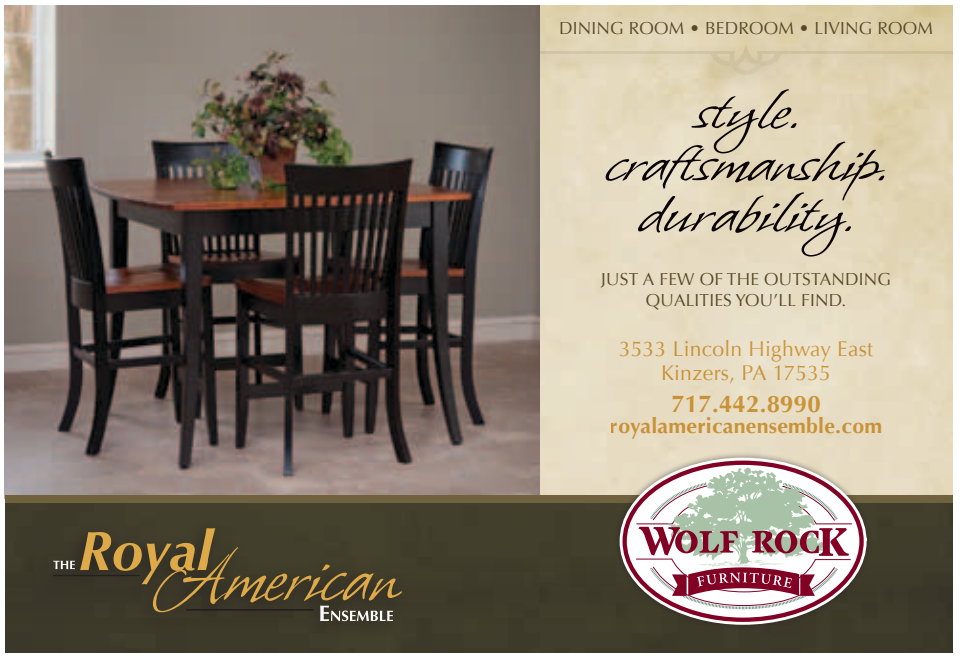
The Turkey Hill Experience is a fun and interactive experience for the whole family.

From there, you'll step inside to be greeted by the high-energy welcome center. Faced with a choice whether to spend time taking in the on-site café, gift shop, and fascinating displays, or proceed to the interactive exhibits for which a nominal admission is charged, you'll want to do both! While the free educational displays are certainly interesting, the paid portion of this attraction is simply a must-see. BONUS - purchase advance tickets online at www.turkeyhillexperience.com and save using promo code AMISH12.

You'll start with a video about making ice cream, inside a giant ice cream box, of course. The interactive fun goes on to include games like mixing and matching flavorful smells, creating your very own virtual ice cream flavor, a ball pit and slide designed to explain homogenization and pasteurization, starring in your own Turkey Hill commercial which you, amazingly, can instantly share through social media, and many more activities including milking a mechanical cow. Now that's progress!

The Turkey Hill Experience is open seven days a week. Hours vary by day. Call 888-986-8784 for current schedule. Getting there is easy. Traveling west on Route 30 from Lancaster City, take the Route 441 (Columbia) exit and head south on Route 441 for about a tenth of a mile. Turn left at the first traffic light to enter the Turkey Hill parking lot. For GPS directions, use 301 Linden Street, Columbia PA.

This is one very short trip from wherever you might be reading this that you'll be very glad you made!



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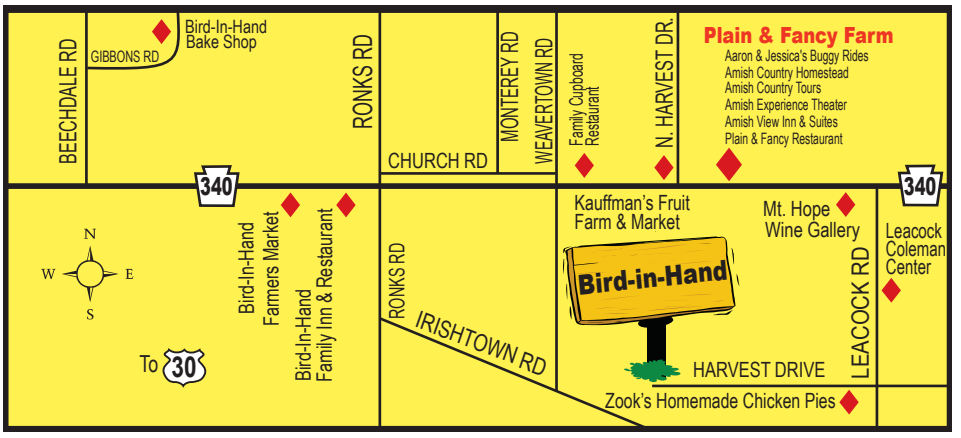
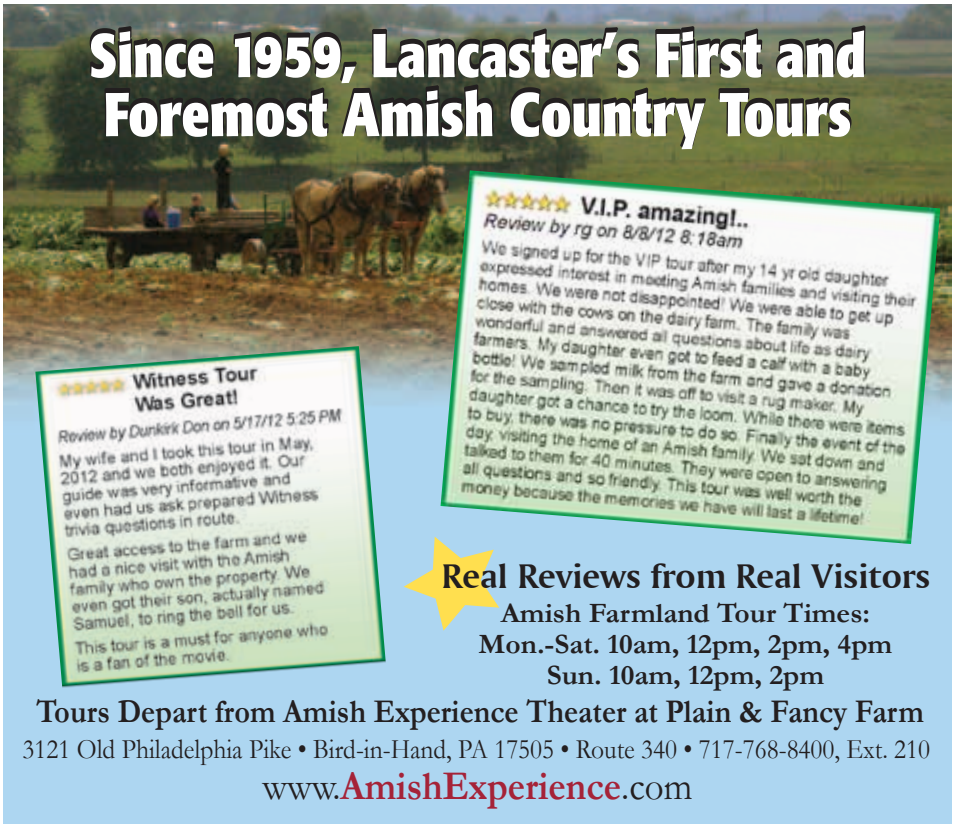
Welcome to the Village of Bird-in-Hand

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Witness Tour Was Great!
Review by Dunkirk Don on 5/17/12 5:25 PM
My wife and I took this tour in May, 2012 and we both enjoyed it. Our guide was very informative and even had us ask prepared Witness trivia questions in route.
Great access to the farm and we had a nice visit with the Amish family who own the property. We even got their son, actually named Samuel, to ring the bell for us.
This tour is a must for anyone who is a fan of the movie.
V.I.P. amazing!..
Review by rg on 8/8/12 8:18am
We signed up for the VIP tour after my 14 yr old daughter expressed interest in meeting Amish families and visiting their homes. We were not disappointed! We were able to get up close with the cows on the dairy farm. The family was wonderful and answered all questions about life as dairy farmers. My daughter even got to feed a calf with a baby bottle! We sampled milk from the farm and gave a donation for the sampling. Then it was off to visit a rug maker. My daughter got a chance to try the loom. While there were items to buy, there was no pressure to do so. Finally the event of the day: visiting the home of an Amish family. We sat down and talked to them for 40 minutes. They were open to answering all questions and so friendly. This tour was well worth the money because the memories we have will last a lifetime!

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Of the many unique village names that dot the Amish Country map, one of the more interesting is Bird-in-Hand. William Penn, an English Quaker, had founded the colony of Penn's Woods, and settlers began arriving from Europe in the early 1700's, moving westward from Philadelphia. The trip by stagecoach, or Conestoga wagon with freight and merchandise, lasted several days. Inns were built every few miles, identified with signs held by an iron pole or attached to the side of the building. The reason for the signs was so that they could be understood by all nationalities. Further, since many teamsters or wagoneers were poorly educated they could not read. Given orders to stop at a certain inn, they were able to do so by recognizing the artwork on the signboard.

The legend of the naming of Bird-in-Hand dates to the time when the Old Philadelphia Pike was being laid out. By 1734, surveyors at McNabb's Hotel were discussing whether they should stay at their present location or return to Lancaster to spend the night. One of them said, "A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush." The sign in front of the inn, which became known as the Bird-in-Hand Inn, is known to have once "portrayed a man with a bird in his hand and a bush nearby, in which two birds were perched."

Variations of this sign appear throughout the town today. McNabb's Hotel was destroyed by fire in 1851. By the following year, a three-story hotel was built to replace it. More recently, it was Bitzer's Hotel before becoming the present Village Inn of Bird-in-Hand, a beautiful bed and breakfast property. The Historic Preservation Trust of Lancaster County states that the existing brick building "may be one of the few 19th century inns in the context of a small town in Lancaster County, which survives with a high degree of architectural integrity." It is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. When referring to their bird in hand symbol, some residents say that the bird nestled in the human hand indicates friendship, comfort, and hospitality, all of which you'll discover in this perfectly delightful little village of shops, farmers markets and eateries.

6000

Number of bolts of 100% cotton fabric at the Old Country Store.

Bird-in-Hand Bake Shop

Celebrating 40 Years of Goodness

Butch & Linda Miller
Owners

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Since 1972, the Bird-in-Hand Bake Shop has remained family owned and operated. Erwin (Sr.) & Annie Miller were the first of this family chain. Now in the second generation, Erwin (Jr.) & Linda Miller, along with their son, Glenn Miller (3rd generation, who has a son Erwin Miller III) have been running the business since 1996. Many of the recipes used today are still the "tried and true from scratch" recipes Grandma Miller used since the family began operating the business in 1972. The wonderful aroma of baking hits you almost before you're through the door. And it only gets better from there!

The family and its many Plain community employees want visitors to get that great homemade taste at a better price than commercial bakeries. "We take pride in the things that we bake and enjoy the look on people's faces as they taste our selection." And what a selection it is! You'll see varieties of fresh baked breads (their cheese bread is a personal favorite), potato rolls, cinnamon buns, "melt in your mouth" whoopie pies, gooey-bottom Dutch shoo-fly pie (their specialty), cookies, fruit pies, angel food and layer cakes, and many, many more items.

Through a window behind the counter, you can observe the mixing and baking process, and see trays of baked goods waiting to go into the display cases or to be sent to fulfill wholesale orders for several local restaurants. (Bird-in-Hand Bake Shop baked goods can also be found at various market stands in five different states.) The sweet scents of fresh breads and cookies always greet your nose!

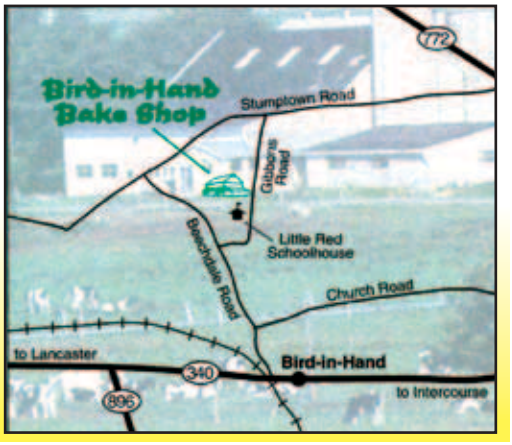
Not only can you indulge your sweet tooth with a chocolate whoopie pie or a creamy cone of local ice cream, but Bird-in-Hand Bake Shop also offers its visitors a few extras. They have a fine selection of local handmade crafts. "Our wide assortment fits many people's tastes and interests." You'll find locally made Amish dolls, pillow cases, pictures, candles, Amish straw hats, hand painted slates, and much more. In addition there is always a variety of canned goods and bulk foods, especially popular with those large families that live in the area.

The Millers realized that with all that food and country peacefulness, visitors might want to linger and relax. "Our large wrap around porch provides an excellent place to enjoy a hot cinnamon roll and a steaming cup of coffee." And with more than enough green grass to go around, they have installed several picnic areas to enjoy, along with public restrooms and waste bins for your picnic use.

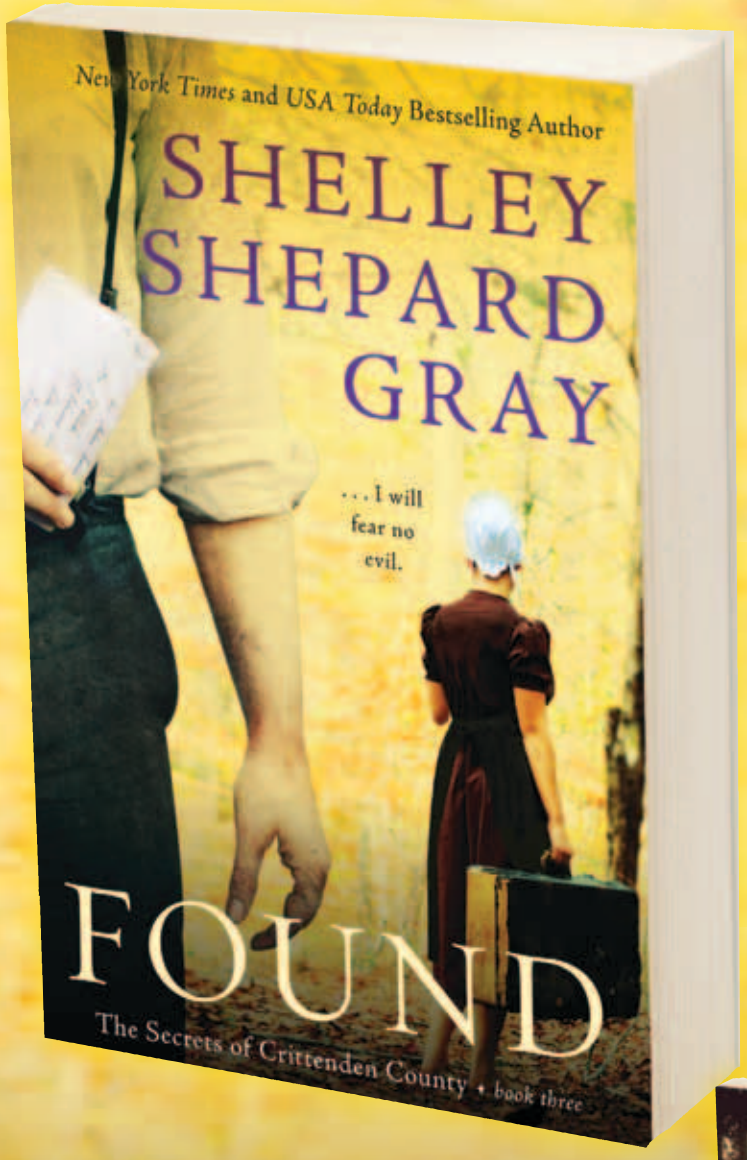
Finally, since the Millers have a family of their own, they know it is important to keep the children entertained on a vacation. "While you shop, your children can burn some energy outdoors in our huge play area." And any place in Amish Country just wouldn't be right without some animals. That's why they've added a petting zoo to their list of attractions.

It may be a little off the beaten path, but at the Bird-in-Hand Bake Shop you can truly savor the quiet peacefulness and baked goodness found only in the heart of Lancaster County. As the Millers would say, "You can consider yourself personally invited to come and spend a day with us in beautiful Amish Country. We are confident that you will find the baked goods, crafts, and location second to none."

Open All Year
8:00AM - 5:00PM
(Winter Hours - 8:00AM - 4:00PM)
Bus groups and tours are welcome.
Closed Sundays, Good Friday, Ascension Day, Christmas, and New Year's.



From *New York Times* and *USA Today* Bestselling Author
SHELLEY SHEPARD GRAY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The Colorful Quilts of the Old Country Store

by Clinton Martin

Quilts are on display throughout Amish Country.

The buildings in the village of Intercourse housing the Shops on Main Street span the 3400 to 3600 blocks of the Old Philadelphia Pike. At the center of it all is the aptly named Old Country Store, the oldest store in the village since its beginnings in 1833. Later part of the original "People's Place" complex, it remains famous for its extensive selection of fabric (6,000 bolts) and its dazzling quilts for sale and on display.

The top floor of the store has been set aside as a very special quilt museum, with changing exhibits of quilts old and new, traditional and modern, showcasing deft stitching, fine colors, and beautiful yet practical art.

One of the special exhibit quilts on display. "Winterberries" by Jo Morton

A special 2012 exhibit is definitely worth seeing, and admission is free to boot. Jo Morton, nationally-known and highly respected in the world of quilting, is the featured artist and nine of her original quilts are on display now through the end of the year. The quilts represent a sampling of the styles she's designed for her 20 quilting books and were hand-picked as her favorites. Hers are new quilts that look old and possess the special charm of antiques. The display quilts portray a 19th century state of mind, with color combinations, fabric choices, and stitching that represent quilting patterns of two hundred years ago.

Jan Mast, manager of The Quilt Museum and Museum Shoppe, is curator of the show. She told us that "Jo's eye for authentic period design, and her exceptional sense of color, pair beautifully to make reliable reproduction fabric designs. Then she blends her own fabric designs with her original quilt patterns to produce extraordinary masterpieces. What a privilege we have at the Quilt Museum to exhibit quilts which Jo made from her own original patterns and created from fabrics which she also designed. This is a rarity!"

The Quilt Museum and the Old Country Store are open Monday through Saturday 9:00am to 5:00pm, and are closed Sundays. You'll find the Shops on Main Street located at the only traffic light in the heart of Intercourse. Plenty of free parking is behind the stores and can be accessed at the traffic light intersection of Routes 340 and 772.

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the Amish Experience

1959 53rd Anniversary 2012

at Plain & Fancy Farm

Last year marked the 52nd anniversary of three of Lancaster's premiere attractions, all at one location on the AAA designated Scenic Cultural Byway, Route 340, mid-way between Bird-in-Hand and Intercourse.

This year marked the 53rd anniversary of Plain & Fancy Farm as the very first family-style restaurant. It remains a legendary dining experience. At the same time, Amish Country Tours (Dutchland Tours) began the first regularly scheduled tours for visitors through the scenic Amish farmlands. And 1959 also marked the opening of the Amish Country Homestead, the only Amish house tour designated a Heritage Site by Lancaster County.

Amish House Tour Unravels Riddles

Amish people wouldn't appreciate visitors walking through their homes all day…nor would you! So the best way to see the inside of a house is on a tour. At the Amish Country Homestead, the staff is committed to interpreting the changing Amish lifestyle. Rather than a museum, it has the feel of a real, "lived in" home. Guides take visitors on a fascinating 45-minute tour through the nine rooms. Discover how church is held in the home and hear the singing. See how Mom does her laundry---with a gasoline engine! Upstairs learn about Plain dress, while the kids enjoy the marble rollers.

The Fisher Amish Schoolroom is where you (or the kids) can sit at actual Amish school desks and learn how all eight grades are taught in one room. An Amish schoolteacher helped decorate the room to give it the feel of a real school. It's all included in the house tour.

Interpreting the ever-changing Amish culture respectfully and accurately is no easy task. The authenticity of the Amish Country Homestead resulted in its designation as the only Heritage Site Amish house tour in Lancaster County.

Amish Hi-Tech

In 1995, a new concept in interpreting Amish life debuted when the Amish Experience F/X Theater became only the third "experiential" theater in North America. The goal of this one-of-a-kind project was to give a more personal, intimate view of the Amish, connecting past to present. Rather than a somber documentary, the story goes inside an Amish family as their son Jacob struggles to decide whether to remain in the Amish faith.

An important missing link in most tellings of the Amish story is the persecution of the Anabaptists in Europe and the perilous journey to America. Rather than observe, visitors will now feel a part of history as special effects, including an amazing technology called "Pepper's Ghost," combine with smoke, wind, rain, and fire effects in a wrap-around barnyard setting.

A superb blending of entertainment and education, this touching and exciting production has moved some people to tears and children to exclaim "Wow!" This show, which has been called "400 years of history in 40 minutes of magic," can only be seen here in Lancaster, so be sure to make it a part of your visit. (Shows on the hour.)

Where the Amish Live & Work

Visitors who simply drive around looking at Amish farms rarely come away with much insight into the unique culture that attracts people from around the world. Amish Country Tours provide certified guides to take visitors down the backroads, deep into the farmlands and scenery that is as beautiful now as it was 50 years ago. Guides offer fascinating information on one-room schools, farming practices, "cottage

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at Plain & Fancy Farm

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industries," wedding customs, and more. Did you know there are Amish millionaires?

Amish Farmland Tours	
Monday-Saturday 10:00am, 12:00pm, 2:00pm, 4:00pm	**Sunday 10:00am, 12:00pm 2:00pm**

But you are not just sitting on the 14-passenger shuttle the whole time. Whenever possible, a stop is made at an actual Amish farm. Other stops may include a local bakeshop, roadside stand, or craft shop. Having a guide is recommended over tape tours, which are often outdated and can never answer questions about special activities you may see that day. Purchase tickets for this 90-minute tour online at AmishExperience.com. Click on "Tickets" in the upper right hand corner of the page.

A Lancaster Original

Amos, Ben, Manny and Elmer are the Amish farmers who supply the Plain & Fancy Farm Restaurant with sweet corn, tomatoes, watermelon, cabbage, broccoli, squash, peppers and onions. These neighbors, and the neighbors before them, have helped Plain & Fancy Farm Restaurant go "from farm to table" for over 50 years. The restaurant is AAA recommended, a PA Preferred and ServSafe award winner, and the Pennsylvania recipient of USA Today's Great Plate Award.

The Amish Farm Feast

Plain & Fancy Farm Restaurant is best known for being Lancaster County's original family-style restaurant. The all-you-can-eat Amish Farm Feast includes your entrees, side dishes, starters, desserts and beverages. Enjoy fried chicken, roast beef, chicken pot pie, baked sausage, real mashed potatoes, buttered noodles, green and yellow string beans, dried sweet corn, chow chow, cole slaw, raisin bread, rolls and apple butter, lemonade, iced tea, hot tea, coffee, sour cream apple crumb pie, shoo-fly pie and vanilla ice cream. A $3 off coupon valid for each adult in the party can be found adjacent to this article.

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Amish Farm Feast
Feast includes entrees, sides, starters, beverages and desserts and is valid for up to 6 adults. Not valid Easter, Mother's Day, Thanksgiving or w/ any other offer, special, group rate. Not valid on ala carte menu. Expires 12/31/12 PLU 505

The New "ala carte" Menu

The restaurant also offers a new ala carte menu featuring mouth watering appetizers, signature soups and salads, charbroiled burgers and sandwiches, and made-from-scratch entrees and platters. The ala carte menu is also a great value with Lunch Specials from $7.95 and Dinner Specials from $10.95.

The Country Store

Find books, DVDs, candles, souvenirs and local handcrafts, and more. Explore The Country Store's collection of traditional Amish clothing, straw hats, bonnets, toys and dolls, and discover new treasures to adorn your kitchen and home. You'll find seasonal items as well as Christmas decorations, available year-round. The store also features Kauffman's Fruit Farm jams and jellies, bakery fresh items from Miller's Bakery, and Plain & Fancy chow chow and apple butter.

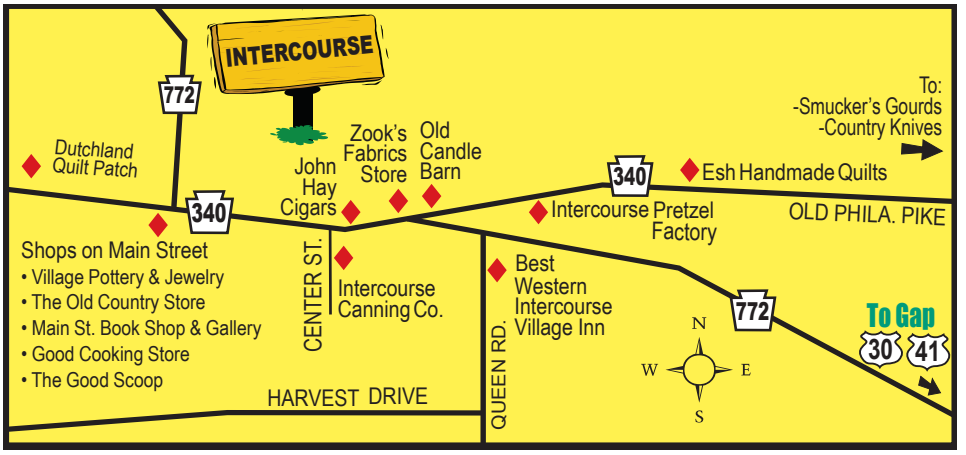
AmishView Inn & Suites

While you're at Plain & Fancy Farm, you're invited to stroll up and visit AmishView Inn & Suites, a classically beautiful hotel that features elegant accommodations and incredible views. If time permits, a front desk representative can provide you with a quick tour of the hotel. The indoor pool, fitness center, arcade, whirlpools and fireplaces make AmishView perfect for an intimate getaway, family vacation, or corporate retreat. Complimentary hot country breakfast, wireless internet, HBO, DVD players, special amenities and kitchenettes come with every room.

Where It All Began

With all of these amenities and attractions in one beautiful location surrounded by Amish farmland, the Amish Experience at Plain & Fancy is the ideal starting point to enjoy all that the area has to offer as you create your own special Lancaster County experience!

Welcome to Intercourse PA



Perhaps no other town in the entire country can claim its fame on one simple thing --- its name. Harrison Ford drove a buggy past the road sign on a memorable visit in the Hollywood blockbuster hit of the movie "Witness." For years people have postmarked “Intercourse” on envelopes, and the jokes from visitors who travel through Bird-in-Hand to Intercourse are endless. There are several theories for the name, but that which we find most plausible follows.

Around 1730, the Old Provincial Highway (now Route 340) was laid out to connect Philadelphia with Lancaster. Conestoga wagons hauled freight back and forth between the two cities. Providing rest for travelers and horses, taverns sprouted along the way, becoming centers for news, gossip, and commerce. The construction of a log tavern in 1754 at the intersection of Newport Road and the Highway took “Cross Keys” as its name.

It remained such until 1814, when the name was changed to Intercourse as part of a failed real estate scheme of a Mr. George Brungard, who had acquired 48 acres of nearby land and attempted to lay out a town site and divide it into sections for sale by a lottery, advertising “151 handsome building lots of $250 each to be drawn for by number.” Renaming the town made sense, as intercourse had a common usage referring to the pleasant mutual fellowship and frequent intermingling which were so common in the informal atmosphere of the quiet country village.

Over time, Brungard’s scheme begat others. As recently as 1971, an enterprising soul tried to take advantage of the town’s name by selling deeds for one-inch square plots of Intercourse to visitors. Creative, but nonetheless a failure. By 1880, Intercourse had a population of 280 with a post office that actually moved among stores or restaurants as owners hoped visits by residents would increase their business.

The local stagecoach service started around 1898 as “a single horse conveyance similar to a market wagon, with a roll-up curtain and double set of seats.” When the stagecoach driver knew of passengers beforehand, their comfort on cold days was added to with the placement of hot bricks heated in the oven, and wrapped in newspaper to preserve their warmth.

Continued on Page 27

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THE AMISH IN THE MEDIA - Second Edition

As part of my continuing Amish In The Media series, I've looked at Amish portrayed on Broadway, in film and on popular TV series. This month, with this initial installment of a two-part continuation of the series, I'll be looking at Amish portrayed on cable TV networks as part of the reality TV phenomenon. As you might imagine, I do have some opinions about all of this. For that you'll need to turn to the back of the magazine and my Publisher's Message.

REAL AMISH ON TV- Who Would Have Thought??? - Part One

by Brad Igou

The Amish "cast" poses for a 2004 publicity shot.

It was the beginning of 2004, and the CBS affiliate UPN television network came up with a new idea for a reality TV show. Put five Amish teenagers and five non-Amish peers in a luxurious hillside mansion in Los Angeles to see what happens when they interact with television and other modern conveniences. It was called AMISH IN THE CITY and it created quite a response.

The local Pennsylvania Dutch Convention & Visitors Bureau vowed to stop the project. The Lancaster County Chamber of Commerce and Industry joined in. Newspapers across the country condemned the idea, and even an Indiana Amish bishop weighed in. "I hope (the show) never happens."

Protests involved fears the network would once again "bribe" the participants, as it did in 2001 attempting to "pay people $500,000 to move from Appalachia into a Hollywood mansion and televise the culture shock." Protests killed that idea.

Much of motivation to publicly display the Amish youth revolved around heightened interest in movies and on TV with plots relating to "rumspringa," the time for Amish teenagers to run around, exploring life outside family and community before making the decision as adults to join the Church. Even the award-winning hospital drama ER featured an episode about two Amish teens in Chicago.

The stereotype adopted by the media is that at 16 Amish youth are encouraged to taste the modern world. "Encourage" is hardly the word. While many think all Amish young people run away and do crazy things and then return to the church, that tends to be the exception. Of course, like teenagers everywhere, some possess more wild oats in need of sowing than others. Obviously, showing Amish young people whose rumspringa time is quiet and tame wouldn't make for very exciting television. Such teens wouldn't volunteer to be on the tube in the first place. The producers are thus left with a very small pool of rebellious teens to choose from.

In 2004, a local Amishman said that of almost 2,500 Amish teens aged 16 and older, only about 5% might be "way out," and "we actually lose maybe 30 to 50 young people a year. They're the disenchanted ones." Consistent with these figures, we understood producers had been here soliciting interest from Amish youth working in restaurants and other businesses, but came up empty handed.

At the time, Dr. Donald B. Kraybill, of Elizabethtown College's Young Center for Anabaptist and Pietist Studies said, "To put Amish kids on television is a cultural slap in the face. Television by its very nature is in opposition to the fundamentals of Amish culture… There's an implied assumption that the Amish are unenlightened and that the rest of the world is more enlightened because we have all this technology… It's possible that many Amish are more satisfied with life than many Americans."

Millersville University sociology professor Scott Schaffer felt that the idea here was to make those watching the show feel superior by watching these unsophisticated Amish teens.

National Geographics 2012 TV Series

"Amish" is not just a lifestyle, it is a religion. I noted at the time that "If they took five Hasidic Jews and plopped them down among Christians, people would be horrified."

The show came and went. It may have had interest for some small audience for a while as the non-Amish kids came off far worse for the way they acted while some of the Amish teens actually looked fairly grounded. I must confess that I did find humor in the non-Amish teens being taken to a farm and put to work. In short, perhaps the most telling indication of how well the show was received is that eight years later it has never been released on DVD.

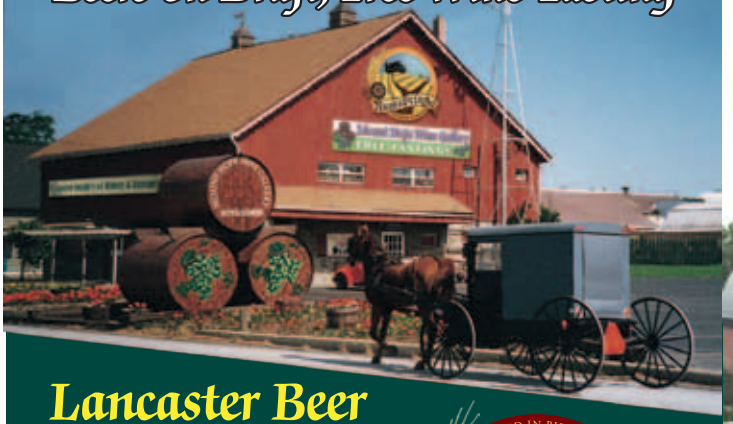
Now it is 2012, and we have not one, but two cable channels producing shows on disenfranchised Amish teens. National Geographic's AMISH: OUT OF ORDER has the tagline "You can take the man out of the Amish community, but you can't take the Amish out of him." The series is produced by the same people who gave us THE DEVIL'S PLAYGROUND and AMISH IN THE CITY, so they are in familiar territory going back to the well of Amish teen angst.

In fact, one of the "stars" is Mose Gingerich, first seen in AMISH IN THE CITY. In his own way, he becomes an interesting bridge between the two worlds and seems to have treated the series seriously, providing insightful commentary along the way. In fact, it's easy to get hooked on his life story (now married with children) and you can even keep track of Mose on Twitter.

Here we "follow the trials and tribulations of individuals who have made the decision to leave the Amish community behind." As for appearing on camera with risk of being shunned, "The ex-Amish in this program accept that risk." Like any teens that leave their faith church, difficult times are likely to follow. We actually see Mose trying to help those seeking more spirituality and those in need of support as they start a new life. In contrast, one episode includes a non-Amish girl with a troubled past who thought she wanted to lead a simpler life and become Amish.

(Continued on Page 28)

Two Great Tastes
Beers on Draft, Free Wine Tasting



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Also on site, be sure to see...
Dolly Bodacious presents Her Treasures

Intercourse (Cont'd From Page 24)

As the days of the dirt road drew to a close, so too did the stagecoach era. In 1923 a transit company was organized and bus service initiated to and from Lancaster. While "many of the Amish residents of the area were eager to see the line started, they did not want to invest in stock of the Company. Instead they bought books of tickets which were really prepaid bus fares." Enough money was raised to buy a Mack Auto Bus for $6,800. It held 25 passengers and even had solid rubber tires!

Today Intercourse has been recognized as a "foodie" town by the Visitor's Bureau. You'll soon discover why walking the streets of this tiny hamlet is an absolute must-visit for everyone.

Visit us online at **www.AmishNews.com**
where you'll find archived issues, Brad Igou's continuing Amish Series, recipes from dining issues and lots more!

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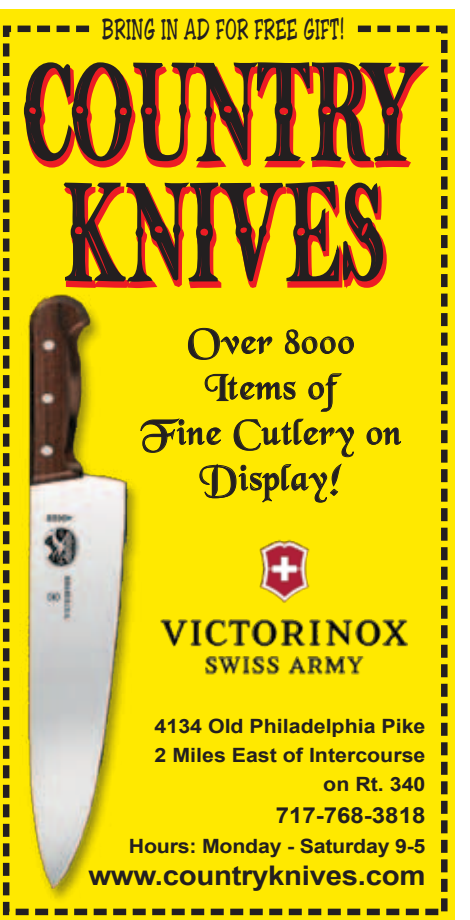

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Kids (and Collectors) love visiting Aimee & Daria's Doll Outlet.

Amish Series

Continued from Page 25

Mose gets ready for his close-up.

The series attracted special attention with the "Can't Go Home Again" episode, described on the National Geographic website…

Ex-Amish teenager Jonas has attained the ultimate teenage dream—a driver's license. But his new-found freedom is cut short when a terrible car crash lands him in the hospital, fighting for his life. Jonas' accident devastates the ex-Amish community. And matters are made worse when his Amish father tells him that, if he had died outside the Amish faith, he would have spent an eternity in hell.

But real notoriety for the series had to wait until a cast member died in a car accident, part of the "Living Fast" episode, which shook even the producers. David Laikind, wrote an amazingly honest, soul-searching record of his thoughts about this event, of which what follows is but a small portion…

To be totally truthful, sometimes the cast members of our reality shows don't always feel like real people. We think of them not in terms of flesh and blood, but as "cast" and "characters" and "story lines"…. We are left with one of the most extraordinary hours of TV any of us have ever been a part of, and one that we all wish we never had to produce.

Next Month: Join me when I'll be back with a look at the British AMISH IN THE CITY knock-off titled THE AMISH: WORLD'S SQUAREST TEENAGERS, and the brand new TLC series BREAKING AMISH.

Gish's Furniture: A Source for Tomorrow's Heirlooms

by Clinton Martin

Gish's Furniture is quite "roomy!"

The Amish have always been known as farmers. From the very founding of the faith over 400 years ago, the Amish were an agrarian society. But, approximately fifty years ago the Amish began to embrace "lunch pail" vocations including factory work and other manual trades. The reasons many Amish men left the farm to seek work outside the home were myriad, but the lasting effect is that today Amish families draw their livelihoods from tilling the soil, in small cottage businesses right in the home, or punching a time clock elsewhere.

One trade especially prevalent among the Amish is furniture-making. The art of crafting quality, lasting furniture happens to fit well with Amish ideals. These Amish craftsmen have been able to nurture natural talent, hard work, and an eye for detail into thriving careers. Many rely on "English" (non-Amish) partners to bring these fine furniture pieces to the public.

That is where Gish's Furniture comes in. Michael Gish founded Gish's Furniture and Amish Heirlooms as a way to showcase the finest Amish furniture. His first experience with the Amish was connected to Amish furniture shops in Ohio, near the aptly named Plain City. He had developed a proprietary varnish which he used to finish furniture, a process which helped preserve the workmanship of the Amish. He soon realized that while many of the Amish men working the lathes, saws, and drills were remarkably skilled at their craft, there were a few who were reaching a superior level of artisan craftsmanship.

This was the furniture he wanted to bring to the consumer. He returned to Pennsylvania and opened his store. That same week, he married his wife Teresa, herself originally from Ohio. And thus was a brand new Lancaster County family-owned business born. Today, his wife, mother, father, and brother are all involved in the business. Chances are Michael and Teresa's two sons, Matthew and Ezekiel, will be helping out in the coming years.

Gish's carries a wide range of furniture, from kitchen tables, hutches, office desks and curios to bedroom furniture and baby cribs. All pieces are available in solid oak or cherry wood and in fifteen different stain colors. As always, Michael's furniture is finished with the varnish he developed in Plain City, thus ensuring that the fine furniture remains fine over the years. Michael smiled widely as he told me, "Here you can have solid wood, handcrafted furniture, custom made to match your home's décor for what many stores charge for veneers and cheap substitutes."

Gish's Furniture is open Monday-Saturday, closed Sundays. Finding Gish's couldn't be easier. Travel Route 30 west, just a half-mile west of Dutch Wonderland. Call 866-925-4474 for store hours.

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Over 70 local Amish families "lend a hand" to the Riehl's store, whether it's sewing the quilts or making other items like quillows, birdhouses, spice mats, candles, cookbooks, and jams and jellies.
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Smucker's Quilts…Farm Family-Owned

by Clinton Martin

Amish homemaker, Rachel Smucker, is a savvy entrepreneur; a businesswoman running both a household and a business, literally side-by-side. However, her enterprise isn't listed on any indices, and you won't see her vying for most innovative awards or other accolades. She is humble and content to do what she does to the best of her ability, with the spotlight always shining on someone else.

Continued on Page 35

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Intercourse Canning Company… A New Home For an Old Favorite!

by Clinton Martin

Susan & Steve Adams, proprietors at the Intercourse Canning Company, have been putting food on their table since 1997 by putting food on thousands of customers' tables every year. At last count, they had over 15,000 loyal repeat customers on their catalogue's mailing list. More noticeably, their brand new expanded retail location in the village of Intercourse has been buzzing with activity ever since they opened their doors just a few weeks ago.

In the beginning, the manufacturing and retail sides of the business had to share (or would that be compete for?) space in the cannery's original location, but it fit the need for the beginning years of the Adams' venture. Fifteen years later, the business had grown, and was ready for a bigger and better home. The retail showroom took over an empty Intercourse site a quarter mile west on Route 340.

But, my what a difference! The Intercourse Canning Company has always been known for its fun, educational, and temptingly tasty shopping experience, offering up an eye-opening selection of nearly 300 canned specialties. They recognized early on that the quickest way to a customer's heart was through his (or her) stomach and thus appeared along the shopping aisles dozens of sample stations ensuring a welcome taste-it-before-you-buy-it shopping experience. With a new home, more space, and an acknowledged energized sense of creativity, the Cannery added a full on-site kitchen featuring (Tuesday through Saturday) small-batch handcrafted interactive canning and cooking demonstrations.

On a recent visit, I was treated with the sights and smells of watermelon jam slowly boiling and bubbling over the blue flames of the deftly manipulated cooktop. The kitchen is small by commercial standards, but is certainly well-stocked by homeowner standards. A long-time ICC employee that I remembered seeing many times at the old warehouse was slowly stirring and overseeing the formation of the naturally pink jelly. She explained what she was doing, and why, but I was distracted by the little spoons crowned with free samples. I enjoyed a taste, and quickly resolved to buy a few jars. For sure, jams and jellies can be found en masse at any chain grocery store, and maybe you can go through life happily thinking that there were only grape or strawberry sold in different sized jars. But, in truth, my taste buds found ecstasy that day and it only took a sample taste of freshly canned watermelon jelly to bring on the bliss!

A new building and a new sign welcome visitors to the Intercourse Canning Company.

Susan and Steve both happened to be there that day and they came to poll me on my opinion of the watermelon treat. I enthusiastically gave my grade A, adding that I also found the canned pickled sweet watermelon rind to be nearly as intriguing. No one can doubt that the Adams' certainly know how to entrance a foodie!

I took the opportunity to delay them from their work (the new store is fully up and running but it seems the owners are still engaged in a good bit of running) and gather a bit of behind-the-scenes information. They began to regale me with tales of opening the new cannery. It was fantastic to hear how much effort it takes just to open the doors for business, securing what appeared to me as endless approvals from various Local, State and Federal agencies. Of course there are still the carpenters, electricians and plumbers, as well as moving thousands of jars from one side of town to the next.

All ICC employees made the move with Susan and Steve and many of them have been with the Adams' since the beginning. One newcomer, an Amish woman named Anna, came on board when the new location opened up. It was the addition of the demo kitchen that intrigued her. She had been looking for something to do outside the home, a fun hobby of sorts, and cooking up batches of creative canned goods seemed like a great idea. Besides, she enjoys meeting people and sharing with them how-to secrets from a local home-cook on canning and preserving local harvests.

In addition to jams, jellies, pickles, and salsas, the Intercourse Canning Company also offers a variety of personally researched soup and dip mixes, gourmet coffees (including a grind-your-own-bean machine) and attractive gift arrangements for that person in your life who loves to eat well.

The store (did I mention its ample samples?) is open seven days a week, although the demo kitchen operates only Tuesday through Saturday. The Intercourse Canning Company is located steps off RT 340 on Center Street in the heart of the village of Intercourse. Turn onto Center by the old gas station. For details, call 717-768-0156 for hours, or visit intercoursecanning.com.

A long time Intercourse Canning Company employee working in the new demo kitchen.

101

Years the Smucker Family has owned the land on which the Bird-in-Hand Restaurant sits.

Strasburg - A Town of Trains & Heritage

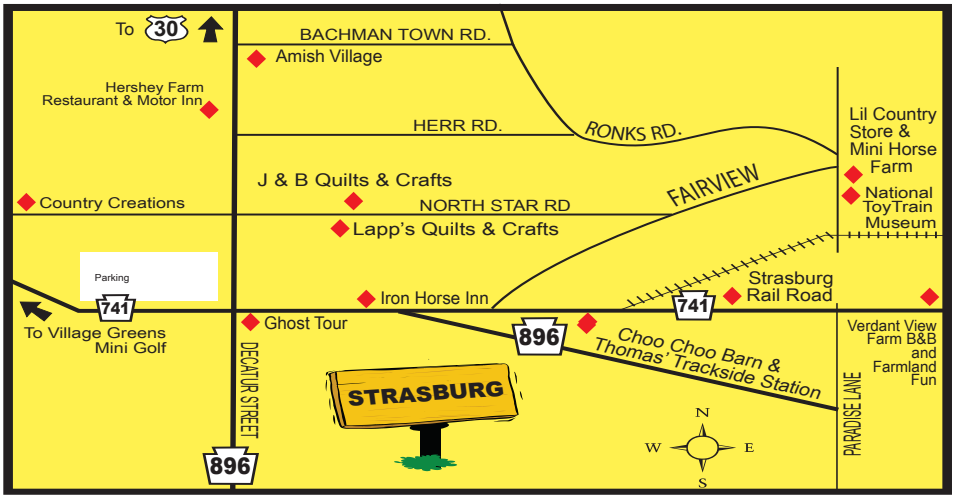
All aboard! Strasburg is a destination all its own in Dutch Country, home to many well known attractions. To name just a few --- the Strasburg Rail Road, Sight & Sound Theatres, Ghost Tours of Lancaster, Cherry Crest Adventure Farm, National Toy Train Museum, and the Choo Choo Barn. But you may not know much about the interesting history of "Train Town."

Strasburg, named for the city in France, was actually "founded" by a Frenchman, Pierre Bezaillion, who traded with the Delaware Indians. The story goes he came to the area in 1693, as French fur traders opened up the first path through this area from Philadelphia to the Susquehanna River.

As early as 1716, when the first wagon was used for hauling goods, the path became known as the Conestoga Road, and the wagons that traveled them eventually became known as Conestoga Wagons. Main Street Strasburg was developed during the next half century as traffic on this road increased considerably and the first log houses appeared in the village about 1733.

Strasburg continued to flourish in the 18th century primarily because of its location along the major wagon routes between Philadelphia, Lancaster, and the Susquehanna River.

As Strasburg flourished, so did its neighbor to the east, Philadelphia. The commercial interests of Philadelphia pressured the State Legislature to improve the transportation network into their city. As a result, a series of canals along with the Philadelphia and Columbia Rail



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Roads were constructed. Strasburg residents became alarmed at the possibility of losing their commercial position and there soon emerged a charter for the Strasburg Rail Road to construct a rail line connecting Strasburg with the Philadelphia and Columbia Rail Road main line near Paradise. Finally in the 1850's, trains were hauling freight and passengers.

About 100 years later, business had dwindled, and a severe storm in 1957 destroyed much of the track. It seemed the SRR had reached the end of the line. To the rescue came a group of local train enthusiasts who began bringing the SRR back to life in a totally new way. They added passenger cars and buildings, and today's Strasburg Rail Road was born, destined to become one of Dutch Country's top attractions.

Appropriately enough, the State decided to build an expanded Rail Road Museum of Pennsylvania across the street, the ideal place to preserve the history of railroading in Pennsylvania. With the other train attractions nearby, it's little wonder that Strasburg has earned the title of Train Town!

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Smucker's Quils & Crafts
(Cont'd From Page 30)

See quilts in various stages of production at Smucker's.

Rachel Smucker, with great passion, has nurtured a quilt and craft shop from one corner room in her home to a stand-alone storefront alongside the family farm's other outbuildings. She stocks the shop not only with her own creations, but enlists the help of many friends and neighbors to create heirloom quality hand-made quilts and crafts that keep her store full of a variety of fascinating designs.

Over 30 years ago, Rachel first started selling quilts out of her home. Her only helper at that time was her mother-in-law, but with such a small shop, two skilled women with needle and thread could maintain the modest shelves with merchandise. With a store that now holds hundreds of quilts in a dazzling variety of patterns, it takes many hands. She is able to offer much appreciated sewing work to the 50 or so neighboring Amish and Mennonite ladies on Rachel's team.

In addition to the fine quilts which have found their way into homes across the Country, her shop offers many different equally fine hand-made crafts, including dolls, pillows, "quillows," quilted books, toys and decorative items.

Rachel Smucker's farm is located along Groffdale Road, just north of Route 23 between Leola and New Holland. Look for the Smucker's Quilts sign, which identifies the farm lane you'll follow to her shop further along down beside the big dairy barn. For GPS and other mapping services, use 117 N. Groffdale Road, New Holland PA. Call 717-656-8730 for specific hours.

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A Book Review of Judith Miller's A HIDDEN TRUTH

by Bette Ranck

A HIDDEN TRUTH by Judith Miller is the first release in a new series titled "Home to Amana." The Amana colonies are located in eastern Iowa near Iowa City and were once inhabited by groups of German Pietists who lived there communally from the late 1800's till the mid 1930's. They were often mistaken for the Amish with their plain dress, separatist viewpoints and the fact that both groups faced persecution in Europe and fled to America for religious freedom. There is also an Amish settlement nearby the Amanas which also was a source of confusion for many people. In fact, the Amish and the German Pietist history and spiritual beliefs have no connection.

Ms. Miller takes the reader inside these two unique closed communities in the late 1800's via a heartwarming story about two young girls and their experiences with life in the Amana Colonies.

Dovie Cates wants to find out about her mother's formative years in the Amana Colonies and writes to relatives living there asking if she can visit. Her father, a widower, is being transferred from his job in Cincinnati, Ohio to one in Texas. As he will be busy adjusting to a new job and a new life in Texas, it seems the right time to visit Iowa. Dovie stays with a relative's family and forms a close friendship with Karlina Richter with whom she shares a room and many adventures.

Karlina has grown up in the Colonies and, as is the custom, has a job to do for the common good. She helps her father shepherding sheep that are raised so that the community will have wool to provide blankets, clothing and other woolen supplies for the self-sufficient group. She has learned that a young shepherd will be taking her place and that she would be reassigned to kitchen work -- certainly not her favorite chore!

The author skillfully weaves the history and traditions of the Amana Colonies through very entertaining adventures that reveal the joys and sorrows of Dovie and Karlina. Clearly Miller has thoroughly researched the traditions and beliefs of the Amana settlers. The result was that I came away having enjoyed a good "read" and an interesting history lesson at the same time.

Judith Miller is an award-winning author who lives with her husband in Kansas, the setting of her first novel. Her "Home to Amana" series promises to have yet more insights along with fascinating storylines involving the peoples of Amana. You'll find more information about Judith and her books at www.amazon.com or www.christianbook.com.

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Special Children - Special Auction

by Brad Igou

Auctions have long been important fund raisers for charities and non-profits in Amish Country. Among the most recognizable are the fire company "mud sales," and the many charitable events held for religious or community support groups, including the wonderful Hospice of Lancaster County Labor Day Auction. Most events feature many of the foods and crafts for which Amish Country is famous.

Since Plain people are often involved in the auctions, opportunities exist to rub elbows without the feeling you are intruding or gawking. In fact, many auctions are planned to coincide when larger numbers of visitors are here for they are often some of the main bidders, especially when quilts are on the block. And there's the food, from donuts to barbeque chicken.

My personal favorite is the Clinic for Special Children Auction, held the third Saturday in September (the 15th this year), at the Leola Produce Auction on Brethren Church Road, a mile north of Route 23 in Leola.

According to their newsletter, the Clinic is "a non-profit medical service for Amish and Mennonite children with genetic disorders." Dr. Holmes Morton founded the Clinic in 1989. Over the first twenty years, case load grew from 100 to 1,000 patients, with the number of genetic disorders treated rising from 12 to 109. The diagnosis of many rare disorders has saved the lives of thousands of children, often with the help of medical centers and researchers around the world. While the work benefits children everywhere, the Clinic's local services are some of the best available, with thoughtful care plans designed especially for the individual patient.

Here is just one example of the Clinic's work. When a disorder suddenly took the lives of two young brothers, there was immediate concern about how to obtain blood samples and diagnose others in the extended family that might be at risk. A family wedding was coming up, so staff members from the Clinic drew blood samples for three hours on a Saturday night at the reception. Out of the 63 people tested, 12 males were discovered who were at risk for the overwhelming infection, along with 14 female carriers.

Back to the auction... last year the same group of volunteers who planned the very first event for the clinic in 1991 were still on the auction committee. When the gavel is first raised the room will see 1,500 would-be recipients of the SOLD signal along with over 30 volunteer clerks and auctioneers presiding over seven simultaneous auction blocks! With 4,000 donated items featuring 89 quilts and everything else from handmade furniture and swing sets to farm equipment and crafts, truly there is something for everyone.

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Welcome to New Holland • Blue Ball

The instability in Europe in the late 1600's spawned and nurtured the pioneer interest in the deep forest lands of Pennsylvania — 60 miles inland from Philadelphia. In 1681 William Penn received his 40,000 square-mile land grant to settle King Charles' debt to his father. Himself a Quaker, Penn had experienced religious persecution firsthand, and decided to establish his American colony based on complete religious freedom.

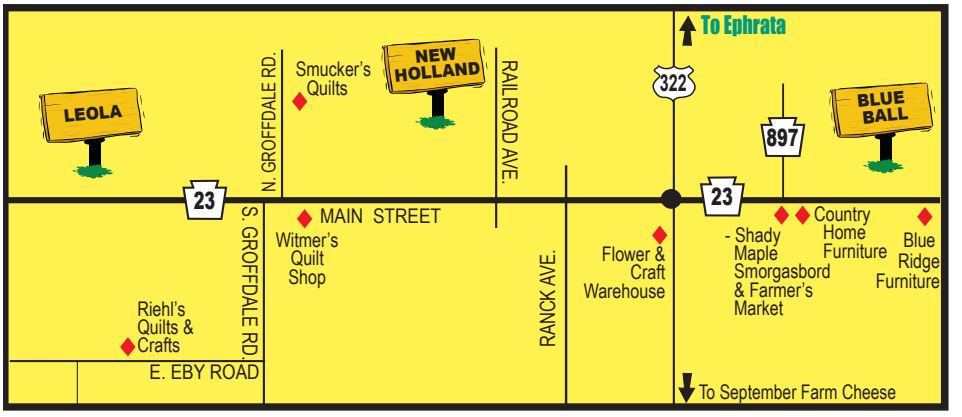
This entire century had been one of continued misery for the peasants of the Palatinate (western Germany). The Thirty Years War had raged across the area with barbaric ruthlessness. The peasant inhabitants fled to nearby Holland for refuge. And within a decade of the end of that conflict, King Louis XIV of France started a new religious war in the same general area. These Palatinate peasants were exhausted by war's desolation, and were ripe for a new start. Traveling land agents for William Penn's new colony found listening ears. In addition to religious freedom and a peaceful existence, Penn offered cheap land. The stated price was 100 English pounds for 5,000 acres. (At today's rate exchange, this would be less than $.04 an acre). By the year 1702, a goodly number of Palatinates had immigrated to Pennsylvania, and Queen Anne, newly reigning in England, was delighted that Penn was colonizing his immense grant without drawing off the population of Britain.

The area today called New Holland was practically covered by virgin forests—sturdy timbers of oak, ash, chestnut, and walnut. By 1728, William Penn had been dead for 10 years and his American colony, called Pennsylvania, was being administered by a proprietary governor while the sale of land was formalized by patent deeds.

In 1802, when a post office was established and an official name was necessary, there was no objection to naming the town New Holland.

These grateful people remembered how extremely kind the inhabitants of Holland were to them, and the assistance that included funds to cover the cost of the refugee German immigrants' ocean voyage.

This was no small matter when the alternative was indentured service for a period of years. For adults, indenture frequently meant four to seven years of labor without pay. Minors served until their 21st birthday. But still, William Penn's Quaker Pennsylvania was liberation compared to the Europe they fled seeking freedom of religion, assembly and speech for all, hopefully, none of which we take for granted today.



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Store Story "1" … Country Housewares

by Clinton Martin

An Amish farm along Musser School Road near Leola in the midst of the Amish countryside is not unlike most farms in the area. The fields are planted with rows of corn, the barn houses a small dairy operation, and there is a bustling machine shop in the former tobacco shed providing necessary secondary income to the agricultural endeavors. Where the similarities end, however, is where the story of the Country Housewares Store begins.

There was a life-altering accident at the farm. Nearly 40 years ago, when Reuben Beiler was just 20 years old, he was involved in an unfortunate accident that left him permanently paralyzed. However, Reuben was still able to help with the family farm all those years. He wasn't able to work in the machine shop or participate in the farm's daily chores, but he was able to establish and keep a store on the farm.

That was the beginning of the Country Housewares Store which started out simply as a lean-to affixed to the side of the farmhouse. Reuben sold general-store items, such as those often needed by neighboring farmers. The business flourished, and Reuben expanded numerous times over the years, finally building a proper stand-alone store in 2000. A few years later he realized it was time to hand the reins of the store over to the next generation.

Continued on Page 43

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Visitors to Lancaster County love to experience the serenity of days gone by.

Part of this experience includes the delicious foods of the area and the handcrafted products of furniture artisans, including the still very much in demand Amish furniture.

One place that offers both is the world famous Shady Maple complex.

When Shady Maple Smorgasbord moved into a larger building across the parking lot a few years ago, the former restaurant building became home to one of the largest and best furniture stores in the area, Country Home Furniture.

The store is now celebrating its 12th anniversary in business.

According to management, "We like to think we're helping to preserve a little piece of America's furniture making history. Our craftsmen are steeped in tradition. They deeply care about their work. That's what Lancaster County is about – history, pride and dignity."

On two floors and 30,000 square feet of selling space in their retail store, you will find eight manufacturers of American-made sofas and recliners, made in North Carolina, Ohio and Mississippi, in addition to over 30 manufacturers of solid wood dining, bedroom, office, occasional and entertainment… and the area's largest selection of Amish furniture.

The hardwood pieces come from American handcrafters and Amish builders in Ohio, Indiana and right here in Lancaster County.

With hundreds of stylish products in traditional, transitional, modern and country looks on the floor, there is something for everyone.

Unlike other stores where your only choices are what you see, at Country Home Furniture, you can have a hand in every facet of your design. That's the beauty of shopping there.

Customers love the flexibility to have a piece made for them by selecting the wood, stain, hardware and fabric.

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"We sincerely encourage you to experience this for yourself. You can certainly buy off the floor or have something made new for you, as you see it. 50% of our customers do that. The other 50% let their imagination run wild. We have stain block boards and fabric handles available throughout the store to give our customers the opportunity to engage in the fascinating process of getting exactly what you want in the style, shape, size and color desired. It's distinctive furniture, made for you , your way. It's fun, and it's easy."

Why shop now? "We have all kinds of special pricing deals and delivery specials going on right now, and we are looking forward to finishing out 2012 in a great way."

If beautiful, quality, brand new, solid wood, American handcrafted furniture are important to you, then you owe it to yourself to explore Country Home Furniture. As they like to say, it's "worth the drive to the countryside" to come see the craftsmanship first hand, then enjoy your meal at Shady Maple Smorgasbord - two great things that make Lancaster County famous.

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Rainbow Theatre's UNNECESSARY FARCE Causes Necessary Laughs

by Brad Igou

When the husband and wife team of Cynthia and David DiSavino presented their first comedy in 1984, the mission was simple --- make people laugh. Their first shows were a catalog of famous funnies… COME BLOW YOUR HORN, ANY WEDNESDAY, SEVEN YEAR ITCH, and BAREFOOT IN THE PARK. Ever since, their claim to fame has been "America's Only All-Comedy Dinner Theatre" and we're truly fortunate they've made Amish Country home for their Rainbow Dinner Theatre.

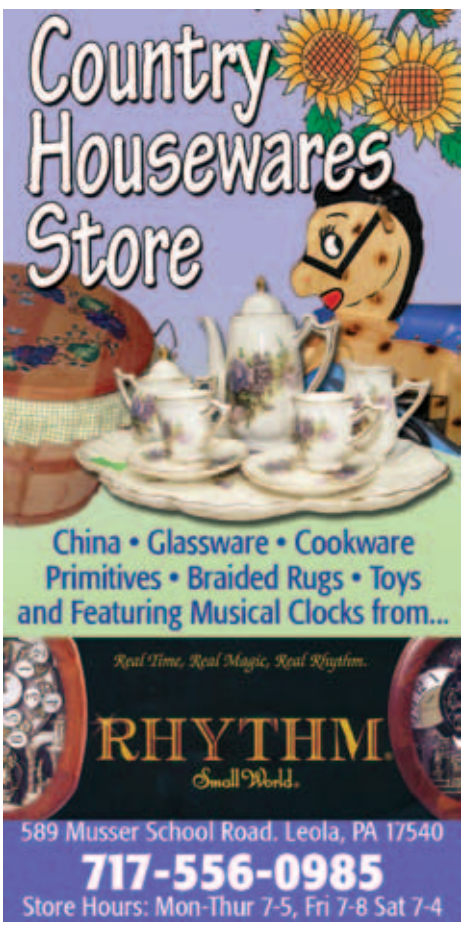
I've always admired the DiSavinos. They are involved in every aspect of the production --- helping folks get seated, checking the buffet, on stage after the show, saying goodbye in the lobby --- everything from writing, directing, designing, and acting in the shows. It's a family affair, with daughter Katy writing her first play in 2010, a time when her parents had compiled over 4,000 performances entertaining 1,000,000 happy theater-goers!

Playing through October 28th is a crazy show with incompetent undercover cops, mistaken identities, non-stop slapstick, and several unexpected plot twists. You could say that cast and cops rely on UNNECESSARY FARCE to bring joys of laughter to their audience.

When I sat down for my salad followed by the generous all-you-can-eat buffet, I looked at the stage and counted eight doors. I knew to expect zany characters running in and out of rooms slamming doors. Throughout the performance, I took to heart Cathy's admonishment of "No smiling. No chuckling. Laugh out loud, for Pete's sake!"

One of the unique features of the DiSavino experience is that your server may very well be in the show, and sure enough, the guy that brought me my cheesecake and coffee was soon up on the stage!

Your ticket for a very enjoyable afternoon or evening is at 800-292-4301 or www.RainbowDinnerTheatre.com. The theatre is at 3065 Lincoln Highway on Route 30 East in Paradise. Where else!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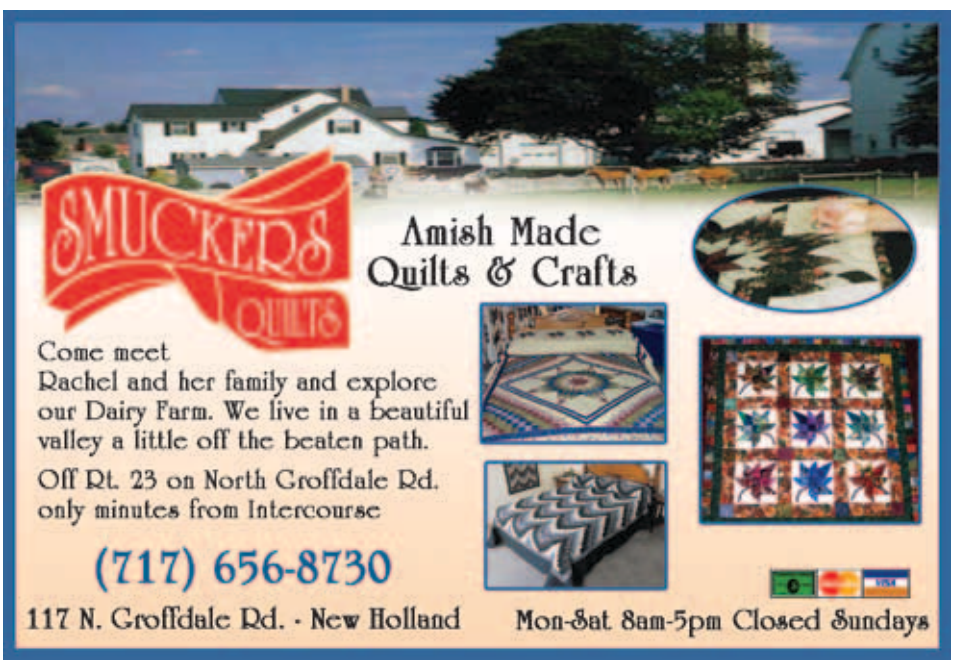
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Country Housewares

(Cont'd From Page 40)

Today, Reuben still owns the land and the building, but the store itself is leased to Michael Fisher. Michael is another example of an Amish farmer who has left the field to work in a family-owned business. He is responsible for the daily operation of the store, which is no small task, as Country Housewares has become a popular shopping outlet for many Amish and Mennonite as well as "English" customers.

Merchandise ranges from kitchen goods, toys, books, furniture, lamps, fine china, silverware chests, and a beautiful line of musical clocks. The store's unique personality leans towards the Plain way of life, definitely part of the store's charm. Some call Country Housewares the Amish department store, which is actually rather fitting.

I enjoy shopping at the Country Housewares Store for the store itself as well as the specialty items not readily found elsewhere. It's not plugged into the "grid" and relies on natural sunlight to illuminate the shelves, although there are propane lamps spaced along the rafters for cloudier days. In the winter these lamps also double as heaters! Solar panels provide the necessary power to run the cash registers, and on windy days the storefront welcomes shoppers with music – from wind chimes hanging out front.

Visit the Country Housewares Store for a uniquely Amish Country shopping experience. You're likely to find something you were positive wasn't available anymore, happily "scoring" a bargain on a new "old" item.

The Country Housewares Store is located at 587 Musser School Rd., Leola. Heading north on Route 772 from Intercourse, turn right onto Groffdale Road. At the T intersection, turn right on Musser School Road, and go around the bend. The store will be on your right. The store is closed Sundays. Call (717) 556-0985 for daily hours.

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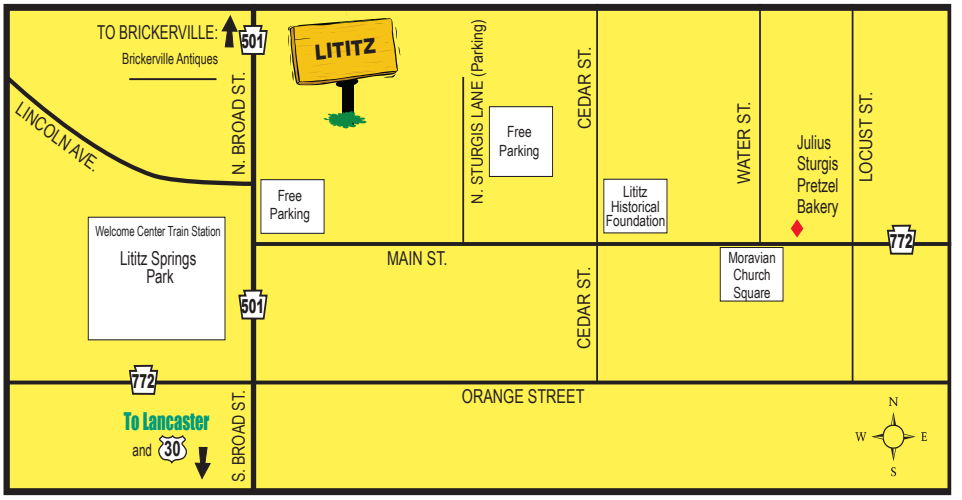

There really is no place quite like Lititz, and visitors should plan time there while in Amish Country.

The Lititz story is tied to that of the Moravian faith in Bohemia. As was the case with other persecuted religious groups in Europe, many Moravians sought freedom in the New World, arriving in the early 1700's, with settlements in Pennsylvania and North Carolina. In 1755 the town actually took the name Lititz, the German spelling for Lidice, where European reformers had taken refuge in the 15th century.

Music and education were important to the Moravians. In fact, the Lititz schoolhouse erected in 1746 marked the beginnings of what was to be Linden Hall, the oldest continuously operating residence school for girls in the United States.

For one hundred years, Moravian church members were the only people permitted to live in the town. It was not until 1855 that non-Moravians were allowed to own their own homes. The complex of buildings comprising the Moravian congregation is well worth seeing, particularly the church built in 1787.

One name is linked forever with the history of Lititz --- Julius Sturgis. It was Julius Sturgis who opened the first commercial pretzel bakery in the New World in Lititz. The year was 1861, and the site at 219 East Main Street is on the National Register of Historic Places. A tour of the bakery, still in operation, is unlike any other and well worth your time.

The more you explore Lititz, the more you'll agree it is one of Amish Country's best kept secrets!

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The Esh Family usually hangs a quilt under the old pump house along the road to welcome quilt shoppers to their home near Intercourse.

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One Sharp Store – Country Knives

by Clinton Martin

Country Knives knows how to show off cutlery in all their beauty.

How many knives do you have in your collection? If by chance you are a collector, you might have a number for me. Most probably you're thinking, "I don't have a knife." But think again, only this time consider how many knives you have in your house. A well-stocked kitchen alone will contain steak knives, butter knives and chefs knives of all sizes and shapes. A step outside into the garden shed is likely to reveal many edged tools like pruning shears and utility knives. It just seems that everyday life calls for cutlery.

As luck would have it, there is a store that specializes in equipping just about anyone with any cutlery one might ever need. Drum roll please... introducing Country Knives with an unending selection right here in Amish Country! Display cases are filled with over 8,000 different sharply edged items from over 300 different manufacturers representing more than 20 countries. You'll find decorative and artistic swords, knives of every variety, survival tools like axes and machetes, and enough kitchen knives to host a reality TV cooking show.

Established in 1976, Country Knives began representing just one manufacturer. Norman and Rose Huegel thought that it would be fun to sell knives retail out of their home. Norman was a new sales representative for W.R.Case & Sons Cutlery Company, so while he was out drumming up wholesale accounts, he was also growing his own store. Case made many different cutlery items from pocket and hunting knives, to kitchen cutlery, scissors and shears. As the store grew, Norman and Rose realized that just one line of cutlery was not enough and soon began to add more brands.

After graduating from college in 1983, their son Brian came into the business full-time and the present store, attached to the family home instead of in it, was built. Today, Brian and his wife Catherine have welcomed a third generation in the business with their daughter Nicole, and son Thomas.

In addition to the retail store, Country Knives provides sharpening services, much appreciated and utilized by local hunters, chefs, and hair-dressers whose knives, scissors, and razors are critical to their professional success. Visit Country Knives and take in the steely beauty of thousands of gleaming cutlery items just two miles east of Intercourse on Route 340. Look for the yellow sign. Open 9:00am to 5:00pm Monday through Saturday, closed Sundays. Call 717-768-3818 for more information.

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Learning Quiltmaking in Classes at a Quilt Show

by Bonnie Browning

Today there are a number of ways to learn quiltmaking. Studying with a national quilting instructor at a quilt show gives you an opportunity to learn traditional and basic techniques, or to learn the very latest new techniques, or to just brush up on some skills. There are many ways to appliqué for instance, so taking some classes will help you find a method that you are comfortable using.

Register early – check the registration materials as soon as they arrive and choose the classes you want. Quilt shows will offer classes for every level, from beginner to advanced. Classes are filled on a first come basis, and many classes will fill in a very short time after the registration materials are available.

What should you expect when you sign up for a class at a quilt show? First, you should receive a confirmation of the items you are registered for, either by mail or e-mail. Be sure to check this confirmation for accuracy when it arrives. It there is an error, the earlier it is discovered, the better chance you will have of getting your choice of classes.

In preparing for the class, be sure to check the supply list. If it requires a sewing machine, be sure you have cleaned your machine and that it is in good working order. Put in a new needle, and fill any bobbins needed for the class. Be sure you take a package of new needles with you – sometimes they break when you least expect it. Cut your fabric to size, if required, so you are ready to start sewing in class. Those who fail to cut their fabric in advance sometimes delay the start of the whole class. If you have any questions about the supplies, don't hesitate to contact the show or the teacher for more information.

Read the registration information carefully. Some shows have sewing machines provided by manufacturers and you cannot take your own machine to the show. This will give you an opportunity to try out a brand new machine. These manufacturers provide educators in the classroom to assist you so you have a good experience of sewing on their machines.

Attend the class with the attitude that you want to enjoy the day. The camaraderie with other quilters is often worth the price of the class – either with quilters you know or new friends you meet for the first time. Sharing quilting experiences with others becomes a way of life for quilters. You can learn a lot even during breaks or at lunch time.

So the next time a quilt show offers classes, jump right in and get yourself registered. Get a group of your friends and make it an outing. And, of course, it is perfectly alright for that van of quilters to stop at every quilt shop along the way. Just be sure you start early so you can make all of those stops.

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Bonnie Browning is the Executive Show Director at the American Quilter's Society. The next Lancaster show will be March 13 – 16, 2013.

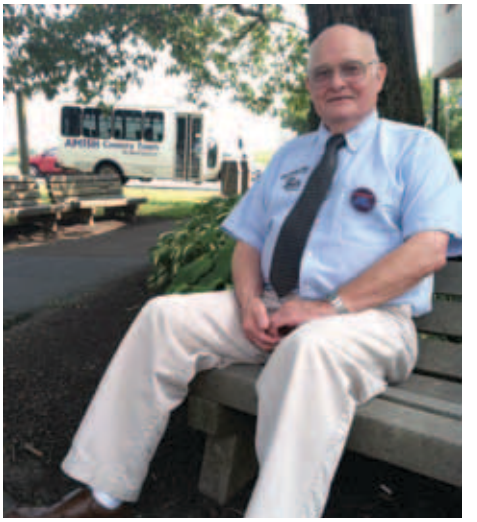
Boy Meets Girl, and Becomes Tour Guide… Bill Whare's 19 Years at the Amish Experience

by Clinton Martin

But for one simple turn of fate, Bill Whare would have never become a tour guide at the Amish Experience nearly 20 years ago. Nor would he have been a Lancaster City firefighter for 25 years before that. He wouldn't have even ever lived in Lancaster County for that matter if it wasn't for a fateful meeting of the girl of his dreams a dozen or so years before all of that.

Bill grew up in York, a town situated a short distance west of the Susquehanna River which draws the western border of Lancaster County. He enjoyed his surroundings and would probably have been content to live there for many years. However, he ended up meeting this nice Lancaster County girl who made it plain to him that she intended to remain right here when he made it plain to her that he intended to marry her.

The two were happily wed and indeed made their home in Lancaster County. They soon moved to Lancaster City, the vibrant downtown hub within Lancaster County's quaint Amish Countryside. The move this time was in pursuit of a job. Bill had worked his way up within the ranks of the



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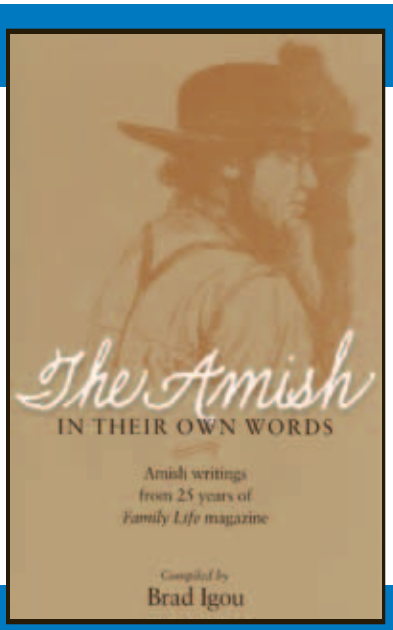
Lancaster Fire Department and in order to keep moving up, he was required to live within city limits. One can understand that a fire department head can't quite call off when disaster hits because the roads are blocked.

For 25 years, Bill worked for the Fire Department before retiring as Captain. There was a brief, and not particularly well-liked stint when he became a sprinkler-system inspector. Thankfully, he soon "doused" that position to don the uniform of a tour guide. (It was the recommendation of good friend and fellow tour guide, Donald Beck, that led him to The Amish Experience).

Bill had important attributes that made him an excellent tour guide candidate. He liked people, enjoyed talking with everyone from all walks of life, and was friendly and professional. What he didn't have, however, was particular knowledge about the Amish. He would even say he didn't know much at all about the Plain way of life when he came on board. That would change quickly when Bill became part of an intensive training program from the area's original interpretive center which gave him a well-rounded knowledge of the Amish, their customs and traditions.

Interestingly enough, the tour he gave when he first started would no longer be accurate today. That is, the Amish way of life, like our own in many ways, is not static and, as such, has continued to evolve over the years. The Amish, out of necessity, develop and grow alongside the world around them, finding difficult solutions to maintaining customs and beliefs within the community that arise from dilemmas created by a constantly changing "outside" world.

You'll see Bill in his official blue Amish Experience shirt, loading people on and off 14-passenger shuttle vans or perhaps introducing the critically acclaimed special effects theater production of JACOB'S CHOICE at Plain and Fancy Farm. The barn-like tour headquarters is located halfway between the villages of Bird-in-Hand and Intercourse on Route 340. Call 717-768-8400 ext. 210 for Tour and Theater hours or visit amishexperience.com for specific details.



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Running with the Amish (Cont'd From Page 8)

Running has really grown amongst the Amish community in the past several years. Two local races help fuel this phenomenon and provide opportunity for you to run with the Amish: the Garden Spot Marathon and Half Marathon, which benefits the Garden Spot Retirement Community benevolent fund, is run the first Saturday in April of each year (www.GardenSpotVillageMarathon.org). The Bird-in-Hand Half Marathon and 5k (www.BIHHalf.com), which benefits the Bird-in-Hand Volunteer Fire Company, is held the first Friday and Saturday after Labor Day.

This year the Bird-in-Hand Half Marathon—part of Run, Ride & Soar Weekend in Bird-in-Hand—will be held September 7 and 8. Over 100 Amish are expected to run in the 5k or half marathon. Runners participating in both the Bird-in-Hand Half Marathon and the Garden Spot Marathon and Half Marathon will receive the much sought after Road Apple Award if they run a half marathon or greater. What more fitting way to commemorate these achievements than with actual Lancaster Country road apples on a handsome plaque!

So don't be surprised if you see Amish people running the next time you are driving the back roads of Lancaster County. And just like all runners, they appreciate your encouragement. Just roll down your window and yell "Vella Shpringa." You are sure to be greeted with a big smile in return!

When Jim Smucker is not running the back roads of Lancaster County training for marathons, he is the president of the Bird-in-Hand Family Inn and Restaurant, and lives near the village with his wife Anna and three teenage children.

Satisfying Cultural Curiosity with Authenticity – The Amish VIP (Visit-in-Person) Tour

by Clinton Martin

Curiosity about the Amish way of life tends to swing to and fro like a pendulum. Like many interests and fads in America, the plain-dress and horse-and-buggy culture of the Amish go through times of heightened focus and then retracts to a mere back-burner of pop culture's microscope to await the next groundswell of bonnet and beard wonderment.

Of course, part of the Amish charm is that no matter the outside interest in their traditions, their daily life tends to remain constant whether the spotlight is shining brightly on them, or is casting but a side glimmer of fame their way. Indeed, the Amish tend to receive their moments on the American center stage simply by their uncommon way of eschewing it.

Currently the pendulum is at a height, evidenced by countless novels portraying Amish culture, a plethora of reality TV scenarios, and an ever-increasing commercial spectrum of "Made by Amish" stuff. Blatant exploitation? Some no doubt is, but with a little effort, one can find the truly authentic.

Certainly, understanding the individuals under the straw hats and bonnets is at times difficult. No national Amish organization exists, no community relations office, and no Amish "embassy" somewhere. So people who want to gain any real understanding must instead come to where the Amish live, work, and play.

Some call them tourists – we call them visitors, guests whom we welcome here. Now opportunities for meaningful interaction with the Amish, while limited, can still be found. My personal recommendation for a truly personal experience that you'll long remember is an intimate tour which offers a small group of visitors significant conversations with enthusiastic Amish folk.

In Amish Country this tour is called the Amish VIP (Visit-In-Person) Tour. It departs daily (Mon-Fri) at 5:00pm from the Amish Experience Theatre on RT 340 between Bird-in-Hand and Intercourse at Plain and Fancy Farm. The tour lasts three hours, and takes you to an Amish dairy farm at milking time to meet the farmer, an Amish business to meet the entrepreneur, and an Amish family's home for a sit-down exchange. Call 717-768-8400 ext. 210 or visit AmishExperience.com for details and reservations.

Blue Ridge Furniture...Building A Business Piece by Piece

by Clinton Martin

Pieces for an entire room are available at Blue Ridge.

Many sounds might welcome overnight Amish Country guests when they rise in the morning. Roosters crowing at a nearby farm, perhaps the clip-clop of an Amish neighbor's horse and buggy on the way to morning errands, and in more and more corners of Amish Country, the whir of a sawmill zipping through a log.

Manufacturing by way of the small family business is at least as at home in Amish Country as farming, although distinctly local in many ways. Most "factories" here would be considered "mom & pop" shops elsewhere. Yet, from the perspective of these business owners, there's really no contradiction. These are make-and-create firms, building and crafting quality durable goods. One such product sought after by visitors and locals alike is solid hardwood, hand-made furniture. In fact, I've heard it said that Amish Country furniture is no longer a style, it has now become a standard.

Blue Ridge Furniture in the village of Churchtown still has the founder's name E.H. Woodworking emblazoned on their manufacturing location, just down the lane and around the bend from the retail floor. Most visitors do not see the workshop, as the saws, drills, sanders, and jointers forming raw lumber into fine furniture don't make for the best backdrop for browsing customers. I was given special access on a behind-the-scenes visit to help me bring the fascinating story of this family-owned business into focus.

Sidney Burkholder, present-day owner of Blue Ridge Furniture, took a few minutes to sit down with me in his office for an informal chat about how he came to be the foreman of his own shop. I noticed some of the tools in his office were just like what you'd see at any other place of business… phones, printers, calculators. Yet other fixtures were quite extraordinary, like the furniture on which we were sitting. I realized I need not wonder where this especially fine office furniture came from. I could look through the window and see men carefully crafting what I was sitting upon.

The building looked somewhat like it had been a barn at one time, although it had clearly been extensively renovated to accommodate a thriving furniture business. Sidney explained that the reason it carried the E.H. Woodworking on the sign was that the business had been founded by a man named Edward Hoover. In fact, Edward had been Sidney's boss, and had hired him as a laborer in 1996. After only two years, Edward approached Sidney and explained that he was going to be retiring and moving out of the area, so perhaps Sidney would like to buy the business and run it as his own. At the time, Sidney didn't feel that was the right decision for him, although he greatly appreciated working at E.H. and offered to be the shop's manager, working for whomever might buy the business.

Alvin Martin happened to be that man. From 1996 to 2000 Alvin owned E.H. Woodworking, but it was Sidney that worked as his general manager. The business did well, and was consistently growing in orders. In 2000, Alvin felt the business was at a point where to grow any more, it would take time and effort that he simply didn't have, as he had other businesses to attend to as well. With a few more years now under his belt, Sidney was ready to take over the business, and did he ever!

"...Amish furniture is no longer a style, it has become a standard."

In 2004, he expanded the manufacturing base by adding another building, a warehouse for storing and finishing the furniture, while keeping the assembly work in the original building. What was missing was a space for retail sales. Most of the furniture was reaching customers through a network base of mostly high-end dealers. Sidney realized that his rapidly growing business needed a local showroom of its own. That notch he added to his enterprise belt in 2006 when he opened a small furniture store in the village of Goodville. Four years later in 2010 he moved his store to a larger 7,500 square foot facility a few miles down the road in Churchtown, where you'll find him today.

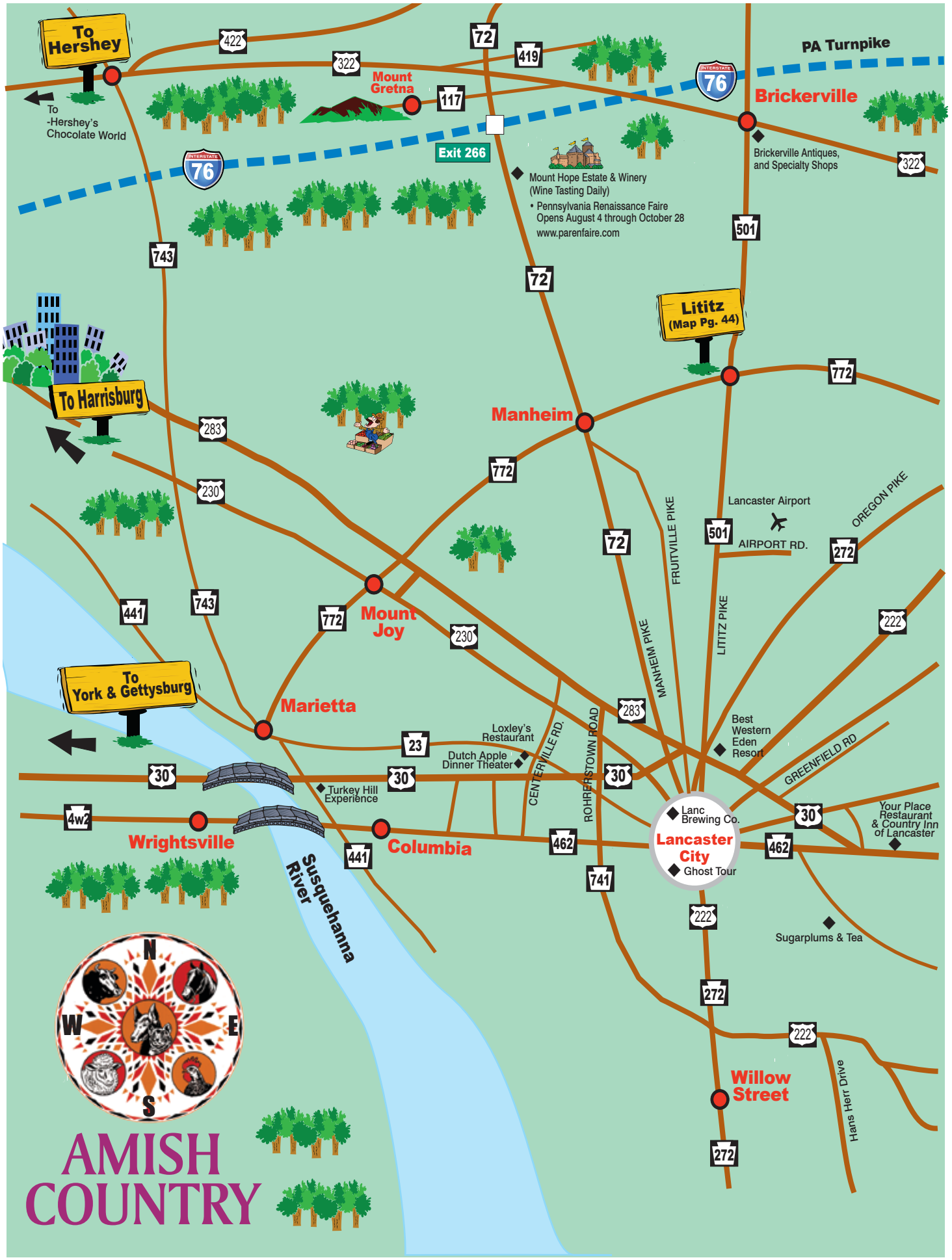
While the business evolved over the years, so too did Sidney's life. During his E.H. Woodworking years, moving from employee to foreman to boss, he got married, had eight children, and hired on a staff of eight employees!

Blue Ridge Furniture has seen 1000's of customers from near and far since Sidney's arrival. He knows his furniture has been sold to visitors from nearly every state including California, Oregon, and Florida. His pieces have even made their way across the Atlantic on their way to Germany. He's yet to ship furniture to Alaska or Hawaii although he has met visitors from both States in his store whom he still considers serious "prospects."

I can only urge you to see for yourself the exceptional quality of Blue Ridge's line with a visit to the Churchtown showroom. You won't get lost traveling along Route 23 to the quaint village of Churchtown, about five miles east of the famous Shady Maple Smorgasbord Complex, or about three miles west of Morgantown. Call 717-445-6595 for hours. Blue Ridge Furniture is closed Sundays.

1882

Year John Hay Cigar Company began operating.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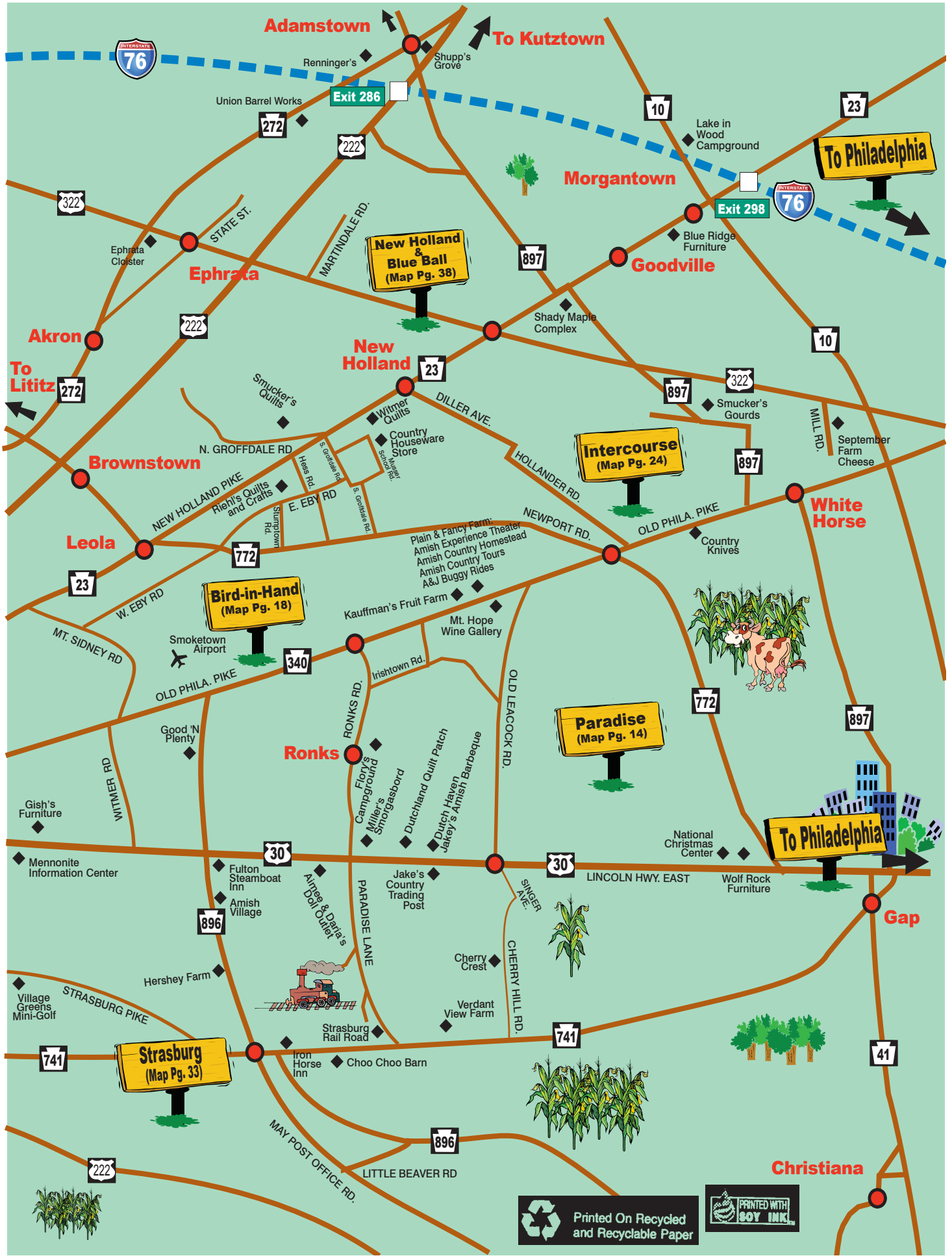
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Christiana
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Our Advertisers

An (S) after the name denotes Open Sunday

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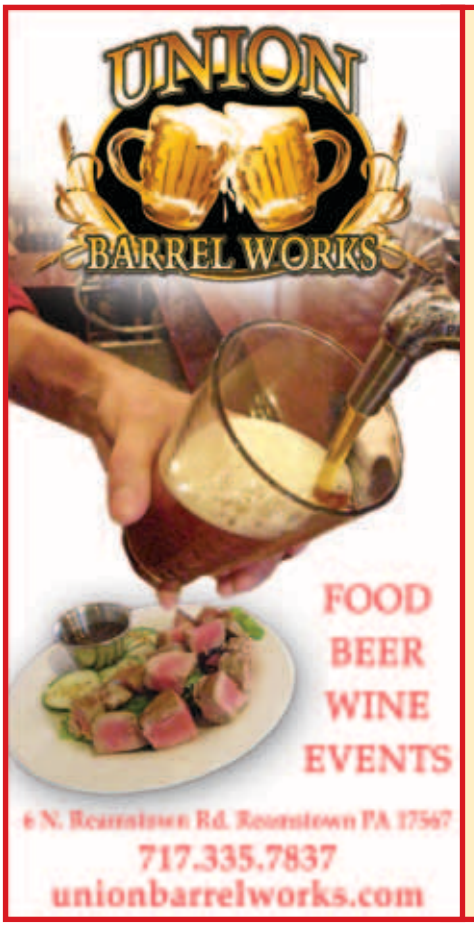
What's Coming Up In Our October Issue?

The Annual Foods, Beverages and Dining Issue

Worthy dining destinations appear around every corner in Amish Country. Indeed, so many visit us for the food first, then everything else. Our annual foods, beverages and dining issue is a cornocopia of restaurant reviews, tasting notes on local beer and wine, and all things foods related. The diversity in our dining options from Zagat-rated fine dining to Amish operated kitchens provides reasons aplenty for extending your stay and planning in advance your return trip to Amish Country.



Union Barrel Works

by Clinton Martin

Thousands of refreshing craft brews quaffed, countless bowls of soup sipped dry, and enough "cleansed" plates to stretch from one side of Amish Country to the other – measure five years of success at Union Barrel Works in Reamstown. When brewmaster and owner Tom Rupp bought an old, worn-out brick building on the square in little Reamstown PA, most locals probably thought he was soon to open the next "former" use for the stately, yet tired town landmark.

To the contrary, revitalization was the word with the opening of a cutting edge brew-pub with great old-world charm. Tom invites you to celebrate the Work's fifth anniversary with new features for his delicious and unique food line, crisp and clean lagers and ales, and an atmosphere unmatched by other "hop houses" in the area.

If you'd like my recommendation, try pairing the wild boar sausages with a side of warm soft pretzels and spicy mustard. Add a generous pour of UBW's Pale Ale.

Finding your way to Union Barrel Works is easy. Turn off Route 272 North of Lancaster between Ephrata and Adamstown onto W. Church St. The parking area is well-marked. UBW is open every day except Monday.

Publisher's Message

Unreality TV – "Beyond the Buggy"

by Brad Igou

The infamous Amish heaters

With yet another TV show to debut in September about the Amish, as described in these pages and to be continued in the upcoming October issue of AMISH COUNTRY NEWS, it seems appropriate for some personal comments and maybe even a little soul-searching.

First, speaking of "reality TV," I can't improve on what Dirk Eitzen wrote in THE AMISH & THE MEDIA when he basically says what we all surely know…

Reality television is really exploitation television… For one thing, the purpose of watching people bicker with housemates, get voted off an island, and gag on live worms is obviously not edification. It is sensation. For another, the so-called reality of these shows is contrived to the core. Transparently so.

He goes on to recount an episode of AMISH IN THE CITY in which cast member Mose starts to go under in the surf while swimming at the beach. Soon the camera, a mere five feet away, shows us his near death experience. Producers and directors create, and then artfully edit situations that elicit the most spectacular drama. Canned music often heightens tension or emotion. Clearly, some cast members enjoy "performing" for the camera. It's about as "real" as our groundhog Punxatawney Phil's ability to predict the winter weather. For me, that the producers of the latest shows refer to their efforts as "documentaries" fails to elevate their efforts to any higher degree of genuine or legitimate. Ken Burns, I think you're safe!

As for "documenting" the lives of Amish young people, certainly for these teens it's not the easiest time of life for wise decisions. As to appropriateness, U.S. Representative Joe Pitts said of AMISH IN THE CITY back in 1994, "We find it hard to imagine that anyone would single out five Native American teenagers in a similar fashion, making light of the process of defining their personal and religious identity in a world often at odds with their own culture."

In that show the Amish lived together with non-Amish in a luxurious Los Angeles mansion. Perhaps the larger revelation was not that the Amish teens were actually "open-minded, resourceful, and adaptable throughout," as Dirk Eitzen notes, but "how shallow, rude, self-indulgent, and even ignorant most of the city kids are." In other words, it wasn't so much that we felt the need to laugh at or feel sorry for the Amish as we were aghast at the behavior of the young people from our own more modern, better educated, and further advanced culture. Should I add civilized?

In an odd moment of honesty, the likely reason the Amish were chosen was expressed by Leslie Moonves of CBS, who noted that "the Amish don't have as good a lobbying group" as those who torpedoed REAL-LIFE BEVERLY HILLBILLIES, a series that would have brought a poor Appalachian family to Beverly Hills. Wasn't Moonves telling us that the Amish as subjects are easily victimized, or maybe just too naïve to know what they are getting into? Thus, if it meant ratings, why not put them on display?

Others have ruminated about us, the viewing audience... that watching these often "silly" people on TV somehow makes us feel "superior" as we smile and shake our heads. Jerry Springer and Dr. Phil wouldn't be on the small screen (my apologizes to the 52 inchers of today) were it not for (a) people willing to lay bare their darkest secrets to the world, (b) an audience eager to watch, and (c) producers and advertisers profiting by facilitating the sensational.

For many teens in these Amish exposés, the TV experience may be little more than a fling. In the end, of course, the consequences can be serious. As Eitzen sees it, the stories often come down to the ultimate decision of consumption vs. salvation. Regardless of one's religious convictions, most of us will recognize that the decision of any young person to turn his back on his faith is serious, life-changing, and often traumatic for the individual, family, and community. Whether this very personal matter should be played out on TV is worthy of mature thought by producers, participants, and all of us.

I am inevitably led to the often avoided and uncomfortable issue of exploitation. Much is being written of late about the use of the word "Amish" to sell products. Sometimes goods are indeed made by the Amish, but often there is no connection whatsoever. Amish heaters are sold all over the country, even though the Amish make only the wooden housing while the Chinese build the heaters. Apparently as a society, we've concluded that "Amish" implies well-built, dependable, traditional, trustworthy, and certainly "made in the USA." Am I the only one who finds it odd that all of these attributes are associated with a religion?

Businesses like ours, AMISH COUNTRY NEWS, and others use the word Amish in their names, even though there are no Amish owners and often no Amish employees. It would, of course, be difficult to communicate what the business is about without using that word, just as the Broadway show NUNSENSE reveals through its title that it is a "Catholic musical comedy" without having to say so. For us, we hope to communicate the substance of our magazine, "All the News in Amish Country That's Fit to Print."

Notably, the Amish normally do not use "Amish" in the name of their businesses, although some now incorporate it into their advertising copy

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The cast of 2004's AMISH IN THE CITY

-- "shop on our Amish farm." Even meals served in Amish homes, if properly licensed, are catered and brought in from the outside. In other words, people are eating restaurant food, but are paying for the experience of sitting at a dining room table with Amish people. Interestingly, volunteer fire company dinners and roadside stands may often offer equally rewarding opportunities for contact with the Plain people.

Tour companies find that many Amish welcome visitors. Our sister company, Amish Country Tours, receives calls from Amish soliciting visits to their shops or businesses. Its tours afford visitors the opportunity to meet and talk to the Amish in less contrived ways and in small numbers where the Amish live and work, with the goal of interacting through a memorable cultural exchange. I have found that the Amish seem to enjoy these visits of simply sitting and talking. In many ways, we are both curious about one another, but in the end we come away seeing each other not as oddities, but "as people."

Most of us are honest enough to say that we more often prefer to be entertained than to be educated. We'd rather see a movie about World War II than read a good non-fiction book about it. (When I was a little boy, HOGAN'S HEROES was one of my first introductions to the war. Yikes!) So it's not surprising then that romance novels and fictional stories of the Amish might well outsell by the millions non-fiction and academic books.

Let us be vigilant to avoid stereotyping and trying to squeeze certain people into preconceived molds. The Amish are neither saints nor, in my humble opinion, should they be subject to pandering as curiosities. It is not just the Amish who must make difficult choices and live with them for the rest of their lives. Respect and dignity, uniquely owned by each of us, need never be compromised or surrendered. For us, that others would do so is sad.

Sign for "Amish Market" in Chicago

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